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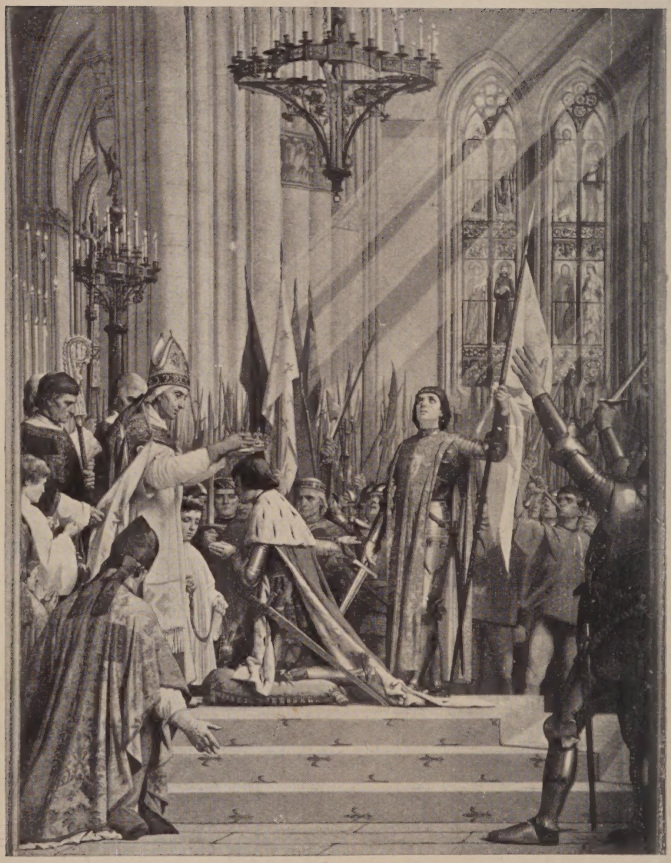

THE CORONATION OF CHARLES VII AT RHEIMS
From the painting by J. E. Lenepven in the Pantheon

A BOOK OF NOBLE WOMEN

BY

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AUTHOR OF

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A BOOK OF NOBLE WOMEN

JEANNE D'ARC THE MAID OF ORLEANS

"Who, doomed to go in company with Pain
And Fear and Bloodshed, miserable train,
Turns the necessity to glorious gain."
WORDSWORTH, *The Happy Warrior*

"A soul as white as Heaven."
BEAUMONT and FLETCHER, *The Maid's Tragedy*

IT is a well-known fact of our experience that the features and figures of those we know best—those of our familiar friends, for instance—are always the most difficult to recall to our remembrance when they are absent; and in the same way there are certain characters in real life whose portraits are blurred and dimmed by our very familiarity with the details of their existence. This seems to be especially the case with Jeanne d'Arc, the Maid of Orleans.

We seem to have known about her always. Our history-books, even the most prosaic of them, wax faintly enthusiastic over her courage and success;

but, on the whole, we take her life and personality very much as a matter of course. Yet, if we could only come fresh to her, and try to realise her from a perfectly detached point of view and from a modern standpoint, she would certainly exist for us as one of the most marvellous manifestations of the world's history.

Here is a young peasant girl, with no hereditary instinct for warfare or command, quiet, shy, fond of church-going and of dreamy reveries, but by no means highly-strung, morbid, or hysterical. To her comes that Call which some of us name Vocation and others the Voice of God.

Without the smallest hesitation or scruple she obeys. Within one short year she has relieved beleaguered cities, stormed redoubts, converted her rough soldiery, routed archbishops and bishops and scheming courtiers whose jealousy strove to paint her as a witch, and performed feats of valour that would be remarkable in a well-trained general, and were miraculous in the case of a simple country girl. And all this when she was seventeen!—the age at which most girls are either in the schoolroom or taking a "little place," according to their rank in life. No one who realises this, and remembers that there is no exaggeration—rather the reverse, indeed—in the contemporary records of her life-work, can deny that Jeanne d'Arc is a proof that the Age of Miracles was not past, in the fifteenth century, at any rate.

We have no description of the actual appearance of the Maid. For most of us, I imagine, who have

been fortunate enough to see it, the statue designed by the Princess Marie of Orleans, in the Gallery at Versailles, fulfils most nearly our ideal. The Maid is straight and tall, with well-made limbs under her soldier's dress. In her crossed arms she holds her sacred sword, cross-handled too, in emblem of her martyrdom; and the girlish head is bent, with a pensive touch around the firm young lips, as though she sees the tossing crowd around the scaffold and the crackling faggots round the stake, as she listens for her "Voices" in vain.

Before we can in the least realise the work that Jeanne was called to do, we must try to understand the condition of France during her childhood.

As a united nation France had ceased to exist. Divided by distinctions of "clan," almost more than by natural boundaries, Burgundians, Armagnacs, Orleanists, Parisians, Gascons, and Bretons were as much the sworn foes of each other as England was of any one of them.

To imagine, therefore, that England was at war with France — united France — during the long struggle of the Hundred Years is to fall into a complete error. It is true that Henry V. aimed at taking the crown from the head of Charles the Dauphin, but it by no means followed that all France was opposed to this attempt. Burgundy's powerful Duke, for example, was far more inclined to favour the cause of the English than that of the French king, and actually did so during a great part of the war. This state of things may be traced to many causes. Unchecked feudalism was one of them,

for long licence had literally made the barons think themselves as good as the king. The weakness of the monarchy was another, and a very considerable cause, during Jeanne's early life.

The French king, Charles VI., was insane, and his only son, the Dauphin, was a weak, pleasure-loving lad, with no will or individuality of his own. Moreover, the Treaty of Troyes, which had been accepted by one part of the country at least, put his claim to the throne aside in favour of the child-prince, Henry VI. of England. It is no wonder, therefore, that the northern part of France, with Paris as its centre, was utterly lost to the uncrowned Charles VII. at his father's death, and that the lands south of the Loire, to which Orleans was the key, were fast slipping from his uncertain grasp.

It was from the farthest corner of France that the deliverer came.

In the little grey village of Domremy, close to the border of Alsace, Jeanne was born. A loyal hamlet was Domremy, holding fast to the side of the uncrowned king, while its nearest neighbour, Maxey, was for the cause of Burgundy and England. No English soldier would pass so far from the beaten track, but more than once the terrified villagers were roused by the tramp of the fierce Burgundian bands, and fled with their children and all that they could carry with them before the face of the marauders, taking refuge over the border till the passing of the storm left them free to creep back to their ruined homes. Such an experience would bite deep into the

memory of little Jeanne, the farmer's daughter, and stand out in glaring colours from the grey canvas of her everyday life.

But usually things were very quiet in Domremy. Jacques d'Arc, the girl's father, worked his small farm with the aid of his three sons, and Jeanne, with her sister, stayed at home, helped her mother in the house, or spent long hours in spinning, or in the fine embroidery and other needlework for which Isambeau d'Arc was famous. Her mother was her only teacher, and her little stock of knowledge would consist of a few simple prayers, some Bible stories or legends of the saints maybe, and the intricate lore of the busy needle. Her teaching fell upon a singularly receptive little mind, however, and its lack of scope was more than atoned for by the vivid imagination which filled in the outlines and laid on the colours for itself.

From the cottage garden, where much of her time was spent, she could hear the bells chiming from the village church, and their sweet tones mingled with her day-dreams as she worked. She could see from thence the mysterious shades of the oak wood, with its Fairies' Well, whither the parish priest went each year to say his mass and exorcise evil spirits. But Jeanne did not care for fairies; her imagination was peopled rather with the persons of the saints than with the 'wee folk, good folk" of wood and hedgerow. While other village maidens sought their rustic lovers in the shade of the oak trees, Jeanne loved to creep to church, from whence in the darkness she could

gaze at the shining St. Michael with his uplifted sword, or the gentle St. Margaret with her conquering cross, in the painted windows, which became a very real part of her waking dreams. It was in 1424, when the Maid was twelve years of age, that there came to her the first hint of the mysterious "Voices" which were to play so important a part in her career.

She was sitting in the garden at her work that dreamy summer afternoon, thinking her childish thoughts, when suddenly there came a light "such as she had never seen before." And out of the light a Voice spake—just simple words to a simple little soul, but wonderful enough to her, considering whence they came—"*Jeanne, sois bonne et sage enfant; va souvent à l'église.*"

So the call came to preparation for her high mission. Whether it was, as she firmly believed, the voice of an angel, or whether it was that still small voice which is ever ready to speak to the ready ear, does not concern us. Historians and ecclesiastics have investigated and weighed the evidence over and over again; and one can only marvel that those who cavil at a miraculous interpretation of the matter should so calmly accept the far greater miracle of Jeanne's whole career as warrior and leader of men.

Meantime, half in girlish reticence, half for fear of parental scoffs, she told no one of this first vision. But after a while the Voice spoke again; and this time the vision was clearer to the child's eye—but whether to the inward or outward vision, still we

know not. It took the form of a warrior, winged, with crown on head, who told her the sad story of her country and of the "pity which the angels had for the kingdom of France." Of this mysterious visitant the child says "she had great doubts at first whether it was St. Michael, but afterwards, when he had instructed her and shown her many things, she believed firmly that it was he."

Then he spoke yet more clearly to the wondering girl. "Jeanne, you must go to the help of the King of France, and it is you who shall give him back his kingdom."

"Messire," she answered, trembling, "I am only a poor girl; I cannot ride nor lead armed men." But the angel bade her go to the captain of Vaucouleurs, saying that he would take her to the King, and that St. Catherine and St. Margaret would come and help her.

The imperative command sank heavy on the heart of the little girl, but she never thought of disobeying. She wept bitterly at the hard task before her, but the gentle forms of women—St. Margaret and St. Catherine, she thought—came to comfort and strengthen her. She could never describe their appearance exactly, but during the next four years they seem to have visited her constantly, so that "*Mes Voix*" were her most intimate acquaintance. Yet we must remember that we have strong testimony to the fact that during this time Jeanne was no rapt visionary, panting for the sacred seclusion of convent walls; nor was she a hysterical

girl of highly nervous temperament, unbalanced in mind and unhealthy in body.

On the contrary, she was strong and well-made, knit like a boy with straight and slender limbs, and always ready to nurse a sick villager or help an overburdened mother. The only things that made her different from the other village girls were her love for churchgoing, and her absolute unconsciousness of the love-making which generally enters so early into the life of a peasant maiden.

Quite four years seem to have elapsed between the first Voice and the beginning of her life-work, so that what at first seemed strange and terrible to the child became in course of time a settled habit of thought, a certainty for which she must be prepared without shrinking or doubt. The next difficulty was as to whom she should reveal her secret. She was aware by instinct of the almost certain opposition of those who knew her best—the father and mother to whom she was "petite Jeanne," a good little girl, somewhat too much given to churchgoing and day-dreaming. Yet a stranger would never understand. Besides, there were no strangers in Domremy.

Louder and louder the Voices spoke, till it seemed as though all the world must hear them; and then, just when her secret had become too much to bear alone in silence, there visited her home her uncle by marriage, good-hearted Durand Laxart, who had always a kind word for "petite Jeanne." Eagerly the girl besought him in private to take her back with him, on the plea that his wife wanted help. For he lived at Burey, close to Vaucouleurs, the

capital town of the district; and it was to the Seigneur of Vaucouleurs that Jeanne's heavenly visitants had ordered her to go. Leave was given, and the two set out along the country road together. Imagine the astonishment of good homely Durand when his young niece calmly told him "that she must go to the Dauphin, to make him to be crowned king."

Perhaps he stammered some astounded words of rebuke, for she asked him next, "Did you never hear that France should be made desolate by a woman and restored by a maid?" And he had nothing to answer.

From that moment Durand was her firm ally. To him it was quite natural that the Seigneur of Vaucouleurs, Robert de Baudricourt, the chief man of the district, should have been pointed out by the angel. So to the *Château* he made his way, and with hesitating speech made known to the burly, downright soldier-noble his request that he would send a little peasant girl from Domremy to the Dauphin, to whom she would give the crown of France. We can hear the loud laugh and the impatient interruption of the Seigneur, "Box her ears and send her home to her mother." So Durand went back to his niece, down-hearted, but unshaken in his belief in her.

Jeanne, however, was quite unmoved by his account. She would see de Baudricourt herself. The interview must have been remarkable in many ways, and we can only imagine that Jeanne was allowed to speak as freely as she did because the listeners were literally speechless with astonishment.

A young knight was present in M. de Baudricourt's suite, and many years later he described her part of the conference thus:—

"She said that she came to Robert on the part of her Lord, that he should send her to the Dauphin, and tell him to hold out and have no fear, for the Lord would send him succour before the middle of Lent. She also said that France did not belong to the Dauphin but to her Lord; but her Lord willed that the Dauphin should be its king and hold it in command, and that in spite of her enemies she herself would conduct him to be consecrated. Robert then asked her who was this Lord. She answered, 'The King of Heaven.' This being done, she returned to her father's house with her uncle, Durand Laxart of Burey."

"She returned to her father's house." The words are simple enough, but they would have represented heartbreak for poor Jeanne had not she been upheld by her certainty of right. For honest Jacques, her father, was filled with anger at her presumption, as well as by an utterly mistaken notion of her motive and intentions. The one thing clear to his slow-moving peasant mind was that his young daughter was about to mingle with rough soldiers and to live their ungodly life. He had a dream, in which he saw Jeanne surrounded by a company of armed men, and never thinking for an instant that her position among them might be one of command and not of fellowship, he told his wife next morning that if he could believe that the thing would happen as he dreamed he would wish that she would be

drowned; nay, would drown her with his own hands.

Her mother, woman-like, thought rather of plans of prevention by more natural means. Let the girl once get "promised" and married to an honest lad, and they would hear no more of dreams. A lover for Jeanne was not far to seek, and it was acting probably on the mother's suggestions that he brushed aside Jeanne's positive refusals, and even appeared before the bishop of the district, ready to swear that the girl had been "promised" to him for years. But Jeanne's unswerving testimony and quiet firmness soon convinced the good bishop; so that she returned to the village, freed from her troublesome suitor indeed, but still face to face with the anger and suspicion of her father.

Wearily the long winter months passed on. Only the reminder of her "Voices" and the approach of Lent, the appointed date of deliverance, sustained her. For by this time all doubt and scruples as to her duty had passed away.

In the January of 1429 Jeanne left her home for the last time, and set out once more with her uncle for Vaucouleurs. Her interviews with the Seigneur were now on a quite different plane. The good man was puzzled and suspicious, but he no longer mocked. His only interpretation of the mystery was that Jeanne must be a witch and possessed of evil spirits. Therefore, when the girl was safely installed in the humble home of a carter and his wife, he brought the *curé* to inspect her; and the

priest, dressed in full vestments, solemnly exorcised the Evil One, supposed to inhabit Jeanne's innocent young body. But nothing happened, save that the Maid smiled outright at such a proceeding on the part of one who had heard her confession and seen her daily at mass during her sojourn at Vaucouleurs.

Meantime, as in the days of old in the case of another Deliverer, the common people heard her gladly. And then one day there passed by the porch where she sat sewing, a bonny young noble, who, having heard the story, asked mockingly, "What are you doing here, *ma mie?* Will you let the King be driven out of his kingdom, and are we all to be made English?"

But the Maid answered with quiet dignity, "Robert de Baudricourt will have none of me or my words; nevertheless, before Mid-Lent I must be with the King, if I should wear my feet up to my knees; for nobody in the world, be it king, duke, or the King of Scotland's daughter, can save the kingdom of France save me alone; though I would rather spin beside my poor mother, and this is not my work: but I must go and do it, because my Seigneur so wills it."

"And who is your Seigneur?" he asked, wondering and half convinced.

"He is God," was her reply.

The mockery of Jean de Metz fell off him like a garment. He held out his hands, and clasping those of the Maid, swore a solemn oath that he himself would conduct her to the Dauphin.

"When will you set out?" he asked; and she

answered promptly, "Rather to-day than to-morrow."

So hasty preparations were made; and while de Baudricourt awaited the return of a messenger to Chinon, announcing the King's will on this matter, young Jean de Metz and his friend de Poulengy, who had been present at Jeanne's first interview with the Seigneur, did all in their power to hasten proceedings.

For many reasons Jeanne determined to put aside her ordinary dress, and to put on instead the clothes of a boy. De Metz provided her with this, as well as with a breastplate and a certain amount of armour; de Baudricourt gave her a sword, the townsfolk subscribed to buy her a horse. But meantime the soul of the girl was harassed by her parents' treatment. Angry commands for her immediate return, threats of a father's curse, followed hard upon one another, and Jeanne began to realise that her first step on her path of deliverance involved the loss of all family ties—all save one, indeed, for later on we hear of a young brother, Pierre d'Arc, leaving his father's house to fight under the banner of his sister.

So at length the little cavalcade was ready to start from the gate of the *Château* of Vaucouleurs—Jean de Metz, his friend de Poulengy, each with his body-servant, the King's messenger and his archers, and Jeanne in the midst.

"Go, and let what will happen!" cried de Baudricourt, still but half convinced; but his words were lost in the sudden outcry made by a woman of the

crowd, who, overcome by the sight of the youth and helplessness of the Maid, called out a question as to how she dared face such unknown dangers. "It was for that I was born," called Jeanne in reply; and so they rode away.

That was a strange journey. The growing familiarity of the little party with one another inevitably led to some chilly doubts as to whether after all the two young noblemen were not making themselves ridiculous by their errand. Perhaps they gave some hint of this, for presently we find Jeanne reassuring them, telling them that her "brothers in Paradise" would tell her how to act when the time came, and that for the past five years they had told her to go to the war and save the kingdom of France. Her perfect confidence impressed them most of all, and they stood abashed when she bade them not fear the bold Burgundians in the path, for that she was bound to go unhurt into the presence of the King.

When at length they reached Chinon, there was a delay of two days before the careless, pleasure-seeking young Dauphin would grant her an audience. It might indeed have been of much longer duration had not a hope of some diversion, some amusement in the midst of the *ennui* of the Court, awakened curiosity on Jeanne's account. She was summoned to the great Chamber, filled to overflowing with richly dressed nobles, among whom Charles mixed freely, conspicuous neither by dress nor manner, as the Maid approached. But Jeanne never hesitated. In her travel-stained boy's garb, with features drawn

a little from fatigue, she walked straight up to the Dauphin, and kneeling, said, "Gentle Prince, God give you good life!"

"But there is the King, over yonder," cried Charles teasingly.

"Gentle Dauphin, it is you and no other," said the girl, rising and facing him with quiet determination; and then she delivered her message. "My Prince, I am Jeanne the Maid. I am sent to you by the King of Heaven to tell you that you shall be consecrated and crowned at Rheims, and shall be lieutenant of the King of Heaven, who is King of France."

Greatly moved in spite of himself, the Prince drew her aside into a recess and closely questioned her. But her replies were always the same. "My Lord has sent me to conduct you to Rheims that you may be crowned—*if you will*."

Charles VII. was a poor creature, weak of will, infirm of purpose, but all that was noble in him must have been stirred by those simple, convincing words.

A trying experience followed. From the first Jeanne had always two parties against her—the ecclesiastics and the military commanders of that day. To the first of these Jeanne was now submitted for cross-examination as to the nature and reality of her visions. This was tiresome enough, but she held her own most valiantly, till suddenly the friar who was conducting the long and wearisome discussion said, "Words are all very well, but God would not have us believe you unless you show us some sign."

Then the girl's temper blazed righteously forth.

"I have not come here to give signs," she cried. "Take me to Orleans—I will there show the signs I am sent to show. Give me as small a band as you please, but let me go."

So they were forced to come to a decision, and as the chronicle tells us—

"After hearing all these reports, the King taking into consideration the great goodness that was in the Maid, and that she declared herself to be sent by God, it was by the said Seigneur and his Council determined that from henceforward he should make use of her for his wars, since it was for this that she was sent."

So Jeanne proceeded, with a little body-guard, towards Orleans. She was better equipped now than at her first start. She had been presented with a suit of armour inlaid with silver, but she wore no helmet, and her girlish head rose up from the glittering gorget in curious contrast to the warlike mail. Her standard was of white linen, with a silken fringe and an embroidered figure of the Christ with the round earth in His hands, an adoring angel on either side. The Dauphin would have given her a costly sword, but Jeanne would have neither that nor the commoner one given her by de Baudricourt. She had noted, on her march to Chinon, that a knight's tomb stood behind the high altar of the church of St. Catherine where she had heard mass. St. Catherine was her patron—it was from her the sword should come. So she gave orders that a sword which would be found in that tomb should be brought to her; and it was duly exhumed, cleaned,

and, when it had been adorned with a scabbard of crimson velvet broidered with the lilies of France, was placed in her hand.

But before she set out she wrote to the English generals at Orleans a letter charming in its simple *naïveté*, bidding them "give back to the Maid who is here sent on the part of God the King of Heaven, the keys of all the good towns which you have taken by violence in His France." We can but imagine the astonishment not unmingled with blasphemy with which such a document would be received by the rough English commanders!

So the little army began their march, with their young leader at the head in her shining array. She had already worked upon the minds of the soldiers, so that they dared not utter an oath nor swear by anything stronger than a *bâton*. Crosses and banners gleamed in the air, mass was sung by the attendant chaplains wherever possible, psalms were chanted — it was all more like a procession of religion than of warfare. But there were enemies already in the camp, who led the girl away from the English forts which surrounded Orleans on one side of the Loire, which she wished to attack at once. They could not cross, however, and had to retrace their steps, while Jeanne openly reproached them for not obeying her command. The English, however, offered no opposition, and towards evening the Maid, riding on her white horse through the gathering twilight, entered Orleans.

The relief of Orleans reads like some wonderful story of romance. The city had been barely

holding out against the English beleaguers for many months. Some of the finest soldiers in France were within its walls, and had little hope of eventual success; for the English were too strong, their fortifications quite impregnable. To them enters a young peasant girl who had never seen a siege in her life. She disregards all their plans and manœuvres, and calmly exposing herself to the shots of the enemy, stands upon the walls and bids the English "*Retournez de la par Dieu à l'Angleterre.*" They answer her with a shout of vile abuse, and she weeps for her insulted womanhood. What a leader is this for greybeards, old in the service of their King!

But that afternoon, when her own men were off their guard and she was fast asleep, the French generals made a secret sortie, and were badly beaten. None knew it in the city, but the Maid, springing from her couch, cried, "The blood of our soldiers is flowing! Why did they not tell me? To arms! To arms!"

She sent her page flying for her horse, while the men-at-arms stared stupidly at one another. Then, as they began to stir, she flashed past them on her white charger, waving her gleaming banner. Hurriedly they scrambled after her, meeting the fugitive troop in full flight outside the gate, on and on, in a breathless rush towards the bastille, upon which the party from Orleans had made such a futile attack, and being joined by Dunois, the Signeur of Orleans, who had till now treated Jeanne with scorn, they flung themselves upon the fort. For hours

the fight lasted, and all that time the banner of the Maid gleamed in the forefront of the battle, as she rode to and fro shouting, encouraging—ay, and weeping too, for the blood she saw so freely shed. But at vesper-tide the fort was taken, and the first triumph of the Maid was achieved.

Again and again we hear the same story. The old warriors of France would plot and counterplot against her, but always she would get her way, and that was invariably the way to victory.

In one of these breathless sorties she received her first wound. The arrow-head "stood a hand-breadth out behind the shoulder"—an alarming adventure, even though it was a mere flesh wound. She pulled out the shaft herself, and then, girl-like, wept at sight of the blood that followed it, and thought herself about to die after the wound was dressed. But a mention of sounding the retreat acted like a tonic. She managed to get on her horse, and cried to her generals, "Rest and refresh yourselves a little, I pray you; and when you see my standard touch the wall, forward! the place is yours."

With her own hand she bore it to the edge of the moat and placed it against the wall. What could the troops do, weary and disheartened though they might be, than rise to the occasion, dash at the wall, and swarm up it "as if it had been a stair," says one astonished eye-witness. "Do they think themselves immortal?" cried their thunderstruck opponents, as they gazed on that white figure by the wall, round whom the arrows whiz in vain.

Their leader and his troop are driven into the river and sink. The Maid remembers his ill words to her, and behold! she weeps. "I have great pity on thy soul," she cries. And so, within eight days, she drives the English from the south bank of the river, and Orleans, the key of Southern France, is safe after a siege of seven long months.

As soon as possible after the siege had fallen Jeanne hastened to the King and bade him make his way to Rheims for his coronation. But the Court gave her more trouble than the English had done. In vain she cried from the tedious ante-chamber to which she was relegated during the councils held by the King's advisers, "I shall only last a year; take the good of me as long as it is possible."

Undue caution, frivolous excuses, foolish intrigues were the order of the day. At length the Maid would endure it no longer. Marching boldly to the door of the council-chamber, she gave her vigorous young knock, and being admitted, knelt at the King's feet, crying, "Noble Dauphin, why do you hold such long councils? Come to Rheims rather, and receive your worthy crown!"

We must pass quickly over the subsequent events —how Charles graciously promised to set out directly the way was clear of the English; how Jeanne undertook to drive them from his path; and how town after town fell before her victorious banner. No wonder that Bedford, the English regent of France, wrote word to England that the failure of his men was "caused in great part

by the fatal faith and vain fear that the French had of a servant of the Enemy of Man called the Maid, who used many false enchantments and witchcraft, by which not only is the number of our soldiers diminished but their courage marvellously beaten down, and the boldness of our enemies increased." And all the while the Maid, while urging on her men to fight, "has great pity" on the English souls. Once indeed we see her sitting on the ground, nursing the head of an unfortunate English soldier who had been brutally ill-used by a Frenchman while in the act of surrender.

And then at length the Dauphin set out for Rheims. Even then there was a long delay before the city of Troyes while the King's councillors debated whether to pass it by or to take it from the English. The army was all on Jeanne's side, of course. That allegiance never wavered. But the King, as usual, could not decide how to act. Once again did Jeanne in desperation knock at the door of the council-chamber, where she was met by the Archbishop of Rheims. "Jeanne," said he, "the King and his Council are in great perplexity to know what they should do."

"Shall I be believed if I speak?" asked the girl.

"I cannot tell," answered the King for himself, "though if you say things that are reasonable and profitable, I shall certainly believe you."

"Shall I be believed?" she said once more.

"Yes," said the King, "according as you speak."

"Noble Dauphin," replied the Maid, "order your folk to assault the city of Troyes, and to hold no more councils; for, by my God, in three days I will bring you into the town of Troyes, by love or by force, and false Burgundy shall be dismayed."

"Jeanne," interposed the Chancellor, "if you could do that in *six* days, we might well wait."

"You shall be master of the place," said the Maid to the King, "not in six days but to-morrow."

It was as she had said. The exciting and heroic scenes pass swiftly by, and always it is Jeanne's white figure in the forefront, Jeanne who leads them on to victory. It was after the last town on the road to Rheims had fallen, that a small band of folk from her own Domremy made their way to Troyes to catch a glimpse of their little village friend, who now led armies and rode by the side of the King. They crowded round her wondering and admiring. "Had she no fear of arrow or bullet?" they asked. "I fear nought but treason," replied the Maid; and her answer gives a sad foreboding of what was to come.

It was on July 17, 1429, that the great event for which Jeanne had toiled actually took place, and Charles was crowned at Rheims. That was a wonderful day. While the highest peers of France went in solemn procession to fetch from its shrine the sacred oil for the anointing, Jeanne was busy dictating a letter—one of her usual forcible, downright epistles—to the great Duke of Burgundy, bidding him give up his league with the English and join hands with his cousin of France. Then, dressed

in her armour, she went to take her place among the peers of France, watching with anxious eyes the actual ceremony, as the King knelt to receive his crown under the shade of her white banner of victory.

Immediately after the anointing, she broke from the pressing throng around her and flung herself at the feet of the King, with tears streaming down her face. "Gentle King," she cried, "now is the pleasure of God fulfilled, whose will it was that I should raise the siege of Orleans and lead you to this city of Rheims to receive your consecration. Now has He shown that you are true King, and that the kingdom of France truly belongs to you alone." And then with choking sobs she begged him to send her back to her mother and the home in little Domremy.

But this could not be. The Maid was far too useful, too precious to let go. So her father and uncle, who had come to Rheims to see the great sight, returned alone, and Jeanne tearfully remained behind. She had said truly that her work, as far as victory was concerned, was over. From that moment of supreme accomplishment dated her failure and her fall. She had always been unpopular with the councillors of the King, and now their jealousy changed to malignant hate. Little by little she realised, partly from signs only too apparent, partly from the forebodings roused by her mysterious "Voices," that some disaster was in store for her. No longer did her heavenly visitants direct her as of old. "Fear not, for God is with you," was their

message; but when she sought for the plain commands issued of old as to her steps, they were dumb.

Paris, the capital of Northern France, the Anglicised town of Paris, now became the object of Jeanne's attack.

Bedford had already been heard to say that the city would fall at a blow if the Maid came on at once; but immediate action was impossible where Charles VII. was concerned.

Intrigue, not war, was ever his preference; and now, to the blank horror of Jeanne, a league was made with Burgundy, the friend of England, the foe of France, whose promise to deliver up the city within a fortnight deceived not even the weak and foolish King.

Indignantly the girl sends a letter to the men of Rheims, who had sent to know why she delayed to march upon the capital.

"Dear and good friends," she says, "good and loyal Frenchmen of the town of Rheims, Jeanne the Maid sends you news of her. It is true that the King has made a truce of fifteen days with the Duke of Burgundy, who promises to render peaceably the city of Paris in that time. Do not, however, be surprised if I enter there sooner; for I like not truces so made, and know not whether I will keep them, but if I do, it will be only because of the honour of the King."

Alas for these brave words! The league was kept with Burgundy, but Paris was not surrendered, and its assault by the dauntless Maid was one of the terrible failures of history. Throughout that ill-fated

day, her high voice shouts her battle-cry, "*Renty! Renty!* (surrender! surrender!) to the King of France!" amid a storm of arrows and foul words from the walls above. For six long hours she stands upon the edge of the moat, cheering on her men. But at nightfall she was forced by some of her officers to return to the camp. "*Quel dommage! Quel dommage!*" she cries again and again. "Why did they not go on till morning?" For she had promised the soldiers that they should sleep in Paris that night, and for the first time their faith in her is shaken.

And next day a peremptory message comes from the King: they are to return—to leave Paris unconquered. It was a fatal policy; but Jeanne, no longer sure of the loyalty of her men-at-arms, dared not disobey. Sorrowfully she laid her worn armour on the altar of the cathedral of St. Denis, at which city the army lay. The act was an emblem of her approaching fate.

Months of wearisome inaction followed, in a Court whose flippant life and purposeless amusement must have been hateful to the downright Jeanne. She still loved to go to church, and she was kindly disposed towards the ladies who thronged around her; for Jeanne was always a favourite with her own sex When at length she faced the battlefield once more, fresh disasters came about; and when she returned to the Court she found that they had set up there a rival "visionary," one Catherine, who as the mouthpiece of Jeanne's enemies was always ready to oppose and contradict her.

These things must have weighed sorely upon the girl's mind. Nearly seventy years later it was recorded by two old men, who were children at that time, that on one occasion, when the morning mass was over in the church of Compiègne, which she was visiting, she uprose against a pillar and said to those who stood around her, "Dear friends and children, I have to tell you that I have been sold and betrayed, and will soon be given up to death. I beg of you to pray for me; for soon I shall no longer have any power to serve the King and the kingdom."

Her Voices had said "before the Saint-Jean" (June 24) she should be "taken"; but it was on the 23rd of May that the fatal moment arrived. In her absence from Compiègne the town had been closely invested, and on hearing this she hastened to the aid of her "*bons amis*" in the city. She made her usual triumphant arrival, and at once arranged to make a sortie in the evening, and to attack the Burgundian bands which were coming to the aid of the English.

This was done; but the rearguard of her little army, finding the latter were nearer than they reckoned, were seized with panic, and fled back to the city, whose gates were hastily closed upon the pursuing enemy and those who had not managed to get inside. Of this Jeanne, riding with the vanguard, knew nothing, and it was with the utmost difficulty that she was induced to turn back when the mishap became known. They reached the city just as the gates had been closed, and thus came

full upon the forces of the enemy, hopelessly mixed up with a struggling band of fugitives from their own troops. There was no hope of escape, for the Maid was conspicuous in her gold-embroidered cloak even in the twilight. A mad rush followed, and almost at once she was surrounded and dragged from her horse.

High above the yells of exultation of her Burgundian captors rang out the bells of Compiègne, sounding all too late a rally for the deliverance of the Maid of France. Nothing could be done; and so Jeanne disappears into the darkness of the Burgundian camp.

In that terrible hour no man stood forth as her champion. The Burgundians and the English rejoiced together with exceeding joy, bonfires blazed at Paris, and Charles the King turned for a fresh diversion to a charlatan from the hills, a shepherd lad who was to take Jeanne's place. In the whole of France not a blow was struck, not a voice was raised on her behalf. But instead, the University of Paris, thronged by learned ecclesiastics, at once denounced her as a heretic, and set all its forces to work to condemn this one young girl to a shameful death.

Meantime Jeanne was fretting her heart out in Burgundy's castle of Beaurevoir for the fate of the people of Compiègne. Helpless and wild with impatience at her imprisonment, she forgot to listen to her Voices as of old, but in one mad bid for liberty flung herself down from the battlements, from a height of sixty feet. So light and flexible was her

young frame that it survived the shock; and though for three days she lay stunned and speechless, she quickly recovered.

The next act of the tragedy in which Jeanne played her part is one which reflects dishonour most upon the name of Burgundy. With shameful frankness, the Maid was sold to the English, and her Burgundian captors received the money that was the price of blood. Yet Jeanne, as a prisoner of war, had the right of ransom—a fact which never seemed to have entered the minds of those who held her captive or of her own countrymen.

The English, in their joy at the downfall of her who had so lately been their destruction, treated the poor child with a cruelty no less absurd than exaggerated. They took her to Rouen, and placed her, until her trial, in an iron cage, where her hands, feet, and throat were bound to a pillar, and where she was never free from the watch of the coarse English soldiers. One would have thought it was some wild savage beast whom they held in check rather than a slight young girl.

When her trial began, the cage disappeared, but still they kept her chained by one foot during both day and night. The terrible strain of the long trial was increased at night by the brutality of the soldiers, who in cruel jest would wake her from her sleep of exhaustion to tell her that she had been condemned and was to be executed at once.

Then the trial itself was calculated to shake the strongest nerve. Against the young peasant girl

were arrayed all the keenest intellects and most subtle theologians of France, full of prejudice against one who had presumed to see and hear what had been hidden from the wise. Behind them, more silent but more terrible in their implacable hatred, stood the band of English generals who had lost honour and renown in her victorious attack. Such men as Winchester, who had refused to move his army, fresh landed at Calais, a step towards Paris, "for fear of the Maid," or as Bedford, who had watched the siege of Orleans from afar, now stood grimly by, watching every movement lest their prey should escape. And Jeanne stood alone against them all, without a friend, without the old clear commands from her heavenly Voices to comfort her, yet full of spirit, clear-headed, steadfast as of old.

The great aim of her foes was to prove that she had performed her deeds of valour by the help of sorcery and witchcraft, and in order to get evidence on this point they made a vile plot, by which a spy, pretending to be from the neighbourhood of Domremy, visited her and questioned her about the days of her early girlhood. At two peepholes of her prison were stationed English nobles, who stooped to such a trick in their efforts to ensnare the innocent girl. But though Jeanne was completely deceived, she had nothing to betray. Discovering, indeed, that her fellow-countryman was a priest, she gladly made her confession to him; and as the simple, earnest avowal was heard, one can but hope that a spark of shame touched the hard hearts of those who strove in vain to find some

fault in her. They now fell back upon the charge of heresy.

Through all these harassing weeks, never left alone, tortured by inquisitive visitors and brutal tricks, the Maid was even deserted for a while by her hope of ultimate freedom. When her Burgundian captor, visiting her, said mockingly, "Jeanne, I will have you ransomed if you will promise never to bear arms against us again," she answered sadly, "It is well for you to jest, but I know you have no such power. I know that the English will kill me, believing that after I am dead they will be able to win all the kingdom of France; but if there were a hundred thousand more than there are, they shall never win the kingdom of France." The Englishman by whom he was accompanied raised his dagger to strike the girl for her brave words; but her gaoler, Lord Warwick, prevented him. Not by so speedy and merciful a death was Jeanne the Maid to die.

It was on the 21st of February 1431 that Jeanne's public examination began. We must not linger over the details of the long process. We can picture the Maid in her shabby boy's tunic and hose, with cropped hair and pale, worn face, answering wearily but steadily the searching questions about her early life and surroundings, and replying with simple faith to the learned priests who tried so hard to entrap her into some admission of heresy. Little by little the gentle story of her village-life was drawn from her—a story which might well have softened any but the most prejudiced heart, and which, in a

kind of autobiography, forms the groundwork of all the lives of the Maid written since that day.

Its simplicity and its evident ring of truth seems to have made some impression, for the Bishop of Beauvais, her most implacable enemy, suddenly made an end of the public trial, and proclaimed that the rest of the examination would be held privately in the prison. He had marked with darkened countenance the occasional cries of "Well said!" from the onlookers, had even heard an impetuous English knight cry, "Why was not this brave girl an Englishwoman?" and now a certain lawyer had come forward openly to declare the trial altogether illegal for want of witnesses and advocates on the prisoner's side. The rest of the nefarious business must be huddled away into seclusion.

So the long days of mental torture and suspense still dragged on; only now there was not even the encouragement of a stranger from the crowd. Yet the Maid did not falter. Her dread of death, indeed, seems to have passed away; for her Voices spoke of coming deliverance, and she still held to the hope that some of the brave generals of her beloved France were nigh at hand—delayed for some unknown reason, but ready and eager to come to set her free. Only this touching belief in those who had betrayed and deserted her accounts for her wonderful pluck and the spirit with which she answered the wearisome, pointless questions.

Thus when they asked her if it were true that her standard had been carried into the cathedral at Rheims when those of other leaders were excluded,

she flashed forth the answer, "It had been through the labour and the pain: there was good reason that it should have the honour." But we catch a hint of chill foreboding in the poor girl's pitiful request, when, on being bullied and questioned anew as to why she wore man's dress, she answered that she must not yet give it up, but that, if she were to be undressed and led out for execution, she prayed that they would give her a long woman's chemise; and when they asked further why she should want this in which to die, though she had lived in men's garb, she answered with faltering breath, "It is enough that it should be long."

Poor little Jeanne! Already the shadow of the stake falls on her, and worse than the leaping flames she dreads the bold gaze of brutal men upon her innocent, helpless form. It is small wonder that she broke down at length in health, and for a fortnight, chained to her bed, tossed to and fro in misery. Even then they would not leave her in peace, for the Bishop of Beauvais visited her and harassed her afresh.

In vain she begged to be allowed the Sacraments. They were sternly forbidden to this devout young daughter of Holy Church.

At length the trial came to an end. They had tried to force her to deny her visions, to confess herself an impostor, but to no effect. "What I have always said, I maintain to this moment," was, in the prison, her unmoved and final response.

But the Maid was, after all, a very human girl of eighteen; and when they led her forth, one bright

May morning, and showed her the high scaffold and the stake at which she was to die unless she "abjured," when they preached at her and bullied her anew, when sympathetic bystanders called on her to save herself from the burning, she gave way. "At the end of the sentence, Jeanne, fearing the fire, said she would obey the Church," —so runs the description of the clerk who saw these things.

We can see what happened. The threatening voice of the Bishop, the cry of protest, the doubt as to what the word "abjure" really meant. Above all, the love of life so strong in the sweet sunshine—and then as they flourished a document before her, so easy to make a cross against the name she could not write—and so the thing was done. It mattered not that the alternative granted by the Church was perpetual imprisonment on bread and water. "People of the Church, lead me to your prison; let me be no longer in the hands of the English!" she cries piteously. But the stern Earl of Warwick was not one to let her go, and the command went forth to lead her back to her cell. Broken in spirit, the Maid returned, and in her new meekness put on her the woman's clothes which the Church required of her.

Her enemies had but a brief triumph.

They had left her on the Thursday in woman's garb; but on Monday, when the Bishop visited her again, they found her in her boy's dress once more, pale and depressed, but no longer agitated or in doubt.

They questioned her closely as to why she had done this, and she answered sadly but firmly that it was more lawful to wear a man's dress among men than that of a woman. She said, moreover, that she would rather die than be left in irons; but if they would allow her to go to mass, and take her out of her irons and put her in a gracious prison and a woman with her, she would be good and do whatever the Church pleased.

Most pathetic little speech! How easily one reads between the lines the sick weariness of the heavy chain, the longing for peace and spiritual refreshment, above all the overwhelming desire for a woman's kindly voice and touch in place of the coarse, rough soldiers who surrounded her by night and day. Yet there must have been visible some new gleam of resignation and courage, for they asked her suddenly if she had heard her Voices since Thursday. And she answered, "Yes."

Then the Maid made her brave recantation for that moment's weakness four days ago. "All that she did was done in fear of the fire; she had denied nothing but what was contrary to truth. She would rather make her penitence for this all at one time—that is to say, in dying—than to make a long penitence in prison. Her Voices had told her that she had sinned by her denial."

So the broken sentences came forth from the faltering lips; and the astonished judges listened for once, and went forth from the prison in silence. But outside in the courtyard was Warwick, waiting to

hear what had passed; and him the Bishop of Beauvais, putting hastily from his mind the memory of the sad young figure within the prison, greeted with joy, saying, "Make good cheer; the thing is done."

Yet even after this terrible interview the Maid seemed to grasp at a hope of deliverance. What girl of scarce nineteen, uncondemned as yet, and strong in her innocence, would fail to do so?

Early in the morning of May 31, 1431, a friar entered her cell with the news of her approaching death. As we have seen, Jeanne was no supernatural saint, no conventional martyr. Girl-like, she "began to weep and cry, saying, 'Must my body be burned to ashes to-day?'" Then passion seized her. "I would rather be beheaded seven times than burnt!" she sobs angrily. "I appeal to God against all these great wrongs they do me."

But the gust of fury soon passed, and kneeling before the friar she meekly made her last confession, and implored that she might "receive her Saviour." There was some difficulty in getting the Bishop to permit it; but at length a second request touched some more compassionate chord, and the procession of priests set out from the cathedral, with lighted candles and ringing bells, for the prison. The bystanders knelt as they passed by, and prayed aloud for the soul of the Maid whose martyrdom they were about to witness; but even in this last act of piety the Bishop would not let her alone

Hurrying to her cell when she had but just received the Sacrament, he said, "So, Jeanne, you have always told us that your Voices said that you were to be delivered, and you see now that they have deceived you. Tell us the truth at last."

"Yes, they have deceived me," she answered in a low voice, worn out with the morning's excitement and with dread of what was to come. "Ah, sieur!" she said to one of her judges, "where shall I be to-night?" And he, who had just condemned her for heresy, but who yet was not quite inhuman in the face of that heart-broken face and gesture, asked, "Have you not good faith in the Lord?"

"Ah yes," she cried; "yes, God helping me, I shall be in Paradise."

But resignation and peace were not yet. Dressed in the long white robe of a penitent, she is driven in her *charette* through the crowded streets, and death seems incredible in the fresh, sweet air "Rouen! Rouen! Am I to die here?" she murmurs; and then again with tears, "Rouen! Rouen! I fear that you shall yet suffer because of this!" And so they reached the towering scaffold and the stake. Yet up to the very last they would not let her tortured soul alone.

Preached at, lectured, harassed, she paid no longer any heed. "She knelt down on the platform and called on her knees upon the blessed Trinity, the blessed Virgin Mary, and all the blessed saints of Paradise."

"St. Michael! St. Michael! St. Michael, help!"

Thrice the cry for deliverance went forth, but there was no reply.

Even the stony-hearted judges wept to see that pitiful sight.

At length the executioner stepped forward; and now Jeanne, about to ascend to the high stake, asked for a crucifix. None was to be found; but a rough English soldier, whose heart perhaps was full of tears, broke a stick into two unequal parts, bound them hastily together, and handed the cross to the girl. She pressed it to her breast, while the worthy friar who had been with her to the last, hastened to fetch a processional cross with a long staff from a neighbouring church, and this he held high up, that those dying eyes might rest upon it.

Then the flames rose up and curled around the white and trembling figure of the Maid. No sound was heard in the dreadful silence save the crackling of the faggots about the stake, till suddenly from the midst of the thick black smoke a cry broke forth—

"My Voices *were* of God! They have not deceived me!"

"Jesus! Jesus!"

Joy, the joy of recognition of her Lord, of entrance into the Paradise of God, was surely the note of the last words breathed by the parched lips of the Maid of France.

They threw those piteous ashes, with the brave heart intact, into the waters of the Seine; but the

English soldiers went to their camp muttering in fear—

"We are lost! We have burned a Saint."

The verdict of history has fully supported their words.

JEANNE D'ALBRET IN 1570
From a drawing by Francois Cloue

JEANNE D'ALBRET, QUEEN OF NAVARRE

"She shall be loved and feared; her own shall bless her;
Her foes shall shake like a field of beaten corn,
And hang their heads with sorrow: good grows with her."
SHAKESPEARE, *Henry VIII.*

IN the early part of the sixteenth century, one of the most turbulent periods of French history, there was born at the palace of Fontainebleau a little Princess, daughter to the King of Navarre and niece of Francis I. of France. Her mother was the famous Marguerite of Navarre, a poetess and writer of stories, one of the few learned women of that age. Perhaps her time was too much filled with literary work for her to give much attention to her baby, for little Jeanne was sent almost directly after her birth to the estate of Madame de Silly, her governess.

Fortunately, the latter was a good, sensible, kindly woman, who allowed her charge to run about in the gardens and woods like any peasant child, so that she became a strong, healthy little girl, full of high spirits and fearless of danger. But to be born a Princess in those days was indeed no happy lot. It meant in most cases that a girl became

a mere tool for use in all kinds of political intrigues, and especially a means of securing fresh territory by virtue of a marriage alliance.

Hence, when Jeanne was three years of age, and her father and mother were leaving France for their own kingdom of Navarre, her uncle, King Francis, would not hear of her accompanying them, but, under the pretence of the superiority of a French education over a Spanish, ordered her to proceed at once to the castle of Plessis-les-Tours, and to remain there as long as he wished.

Jeanne was, of course, too young to know the reasons for this decree, or to care very much where she lived. But she must have missed the frequent visits to her royal father and uncle, who were both so proud and fond of her that she earned at this time the nickname of "*La mignon des rois*" (the kings' darling).

Meantime Jeanne's imprisonment, for such it was in fact though not in name, was made as pleasant as possible to the little girl. She was well taught, and was allowed the company of several children of her own age from time to time, carefully selected from the noblest families in France, and all instructed, no doubt, to convince the Princess that her lot was one to be envied.

So, until she was nine years old, little Jeanne regarded her gilded cage with much content, knowing nothing of the world outside, her mind lulled to sleep by the monotonous regularity of each uneventful day. But the active little soul was developing

beneath its apparent lethargy, and it only needed a slight stimulus to stir it to revolt.

Soon after her ninth birthday, her aunt and godmother, the Princess Isabel d'Albret, brought her children to visit their solitary little cousin. These high-spirited youngsters had much to say of the joys of the outside world, of wild rides over moorland stretches on the one hand, and of gay carnivals and pageants on the other. They looked with disgust on the gloom of the royal castle of Plessis, surrounded by dense forests and washed by the rushing waters of the Loire. They told her of the past history of the place, when it was the favourite fortress of their terrible ancestor, Louis XI., pointing out the iron cages in which that dread tyrant immured his victims, and the pitfalls by which the palace was surrounded. By the time the visit was over, Jeanne was a different child. She knew herself a prisoner, and began to long for a freedom of which as yet she knew so little. She would not study; she wrote imploring letters to her father and to her uncle, begging that she might live with her parents or reside at the French Court; and when this was refused, she would not answer their letters, but gave herself up to melancholy and dejection.

The Castle became for her a place of terror. She thought she heard the rasping voice of Louis XI. echo through the great hall, and saw the victims of Tristan l'Hermite, his provost-marshal, hanging from every tree in the gardens. She hated to leave her room, where she sat crying miserably for hours

together, till her pretty complexion grew dull and her bright hair wild and neglected.

But Francis was inexorable. He dreaded that her father would marry the Princess to Philip of Spain, and thus join together the provinces of Spain proper and Navarre. His only concession, three years later, was to arrange another marriage for her himself, with the Duke of Cleves, a gallant youth, who as a Lutheran would strengthen the bond of union between the Protestants of the North and France.

Jeanne, however, was not willing to pay such a price for freedom. The very idea of marriage may have been distasteful to her, as to many young girls; possibly she disliked the union with a husband who held a different faith from that in which she had been strictly brought up. Certainly her pride of birth and country had much to do with her vehement dislike, for when she was sent for to the Court to be introduced to her suitor, this twelve-year-old child behaved in so stiff and reserved a manner that the King became very angry with her; but when, at his request, her governess, Madame de Silly, scolded her well for her want of courtesy to him, and reminded her of the advantages of the match, Jeanne replied with scorn, "I see no advantage in leaving my land of France and my inheritance of Navarre to marry a Duke of Cleves."

Of course the King's will prevailed, and the arrangements for the betrothal began. But Jeanne did not cease to rebel, and when she found that

of no avail, relieved her feelings by a secret protest, in the form of a letter, signed by herself and witnessed by three of her household, to the effect that she was being forced into the marriage by dread of "the King my father and the Queen my mother, who have threatened to have me whipped by my governess. If I do not consent (she tells me), I shall be punished so severely as to cause my death; and that by refusing I may bring about the ruin and destruction of my parents and their house."

A sense of the inevitable, rather than actual fear, seems to have been the real means which brought the high-spirited child to the hated union. She was not even afraid to affront publicly her all-powerful uncle, the King of France; for when at the marriage ceremony he advanced to lead the child to the altar, the little bride, rising sulkily from her seat, declared that her heavy robes, studded with jewels, prevented her from walking.

Alas for her dignity! At a sign from the King, the Constable de Montmorency took her up in his arms and carried her to the chapel, where the ceremony was concluded. Curiously enough, she never saw her husband again; for directly the jousts and tourneys and banquets that celebrated the wedding feast were over, she went away with her mother to Pau, there to complete her education, until she was old enough to rejoin the Duke.

During the two peaceful years she spent in her mother's care the political outlook changed. The Duke of Cleves joined the side of Spain, and Francis, in great wrath, obtained from the Pope a formal

annulling of the marriage with his niece, to the latter's great joy and relief. It was with very different feelings that she looked upon her second suitor, Antoine, Duke of Vendôme, although he was but a poor creature, changeable and uncertain in mood and temper. His handsome face and charm of manner appealed strongly, however, to Jeanne, now a beautiful and accomplished girl of nineteen. She disregarded the opposition of her cousin, Henri II., who had succeeded to the French crown, married the fascinating Antoine, and was proclaimed with him the direct heir of the kingdom of Navarre.

During these quiet years at Pau, Jeanne had heard and read much of the principles of the religion of the Lutherans or Huguenots, as they were called in France, and began to incline towards them. But before she could make public profession of a change of creed, family troubles began to throng upon her.

Two months after the marriage her mother suddenly died, which not only plunged Jeanne into the deepest grief, but left her with most of the business of public affairs upon her hands, since her father was too crushed, and her husband too indifferent, to manage them aright.

Thus her first child was left to the care of Madame de Silly, who, either because she had become demented in her old age or because she thought a prince required more careful rearing than a princess, coddled and cosseted the boy, keeping him perpetually in a hot nursery for fear he should take cold; and thus he became so weak, that although

his mother did all she could to remedy the harm done, he died before he was two years old.

This was a great blow to the old King of Navarre, who longed for an heir in the direct line of male descent. Before long, however, he was presented with another grandson, a strong and sturdy boy, who became the apple of his eye.

The fate of this little Prince was no less sad than that of his brother. While his parents were one day with his grandfather at the chase, the nurse stood by the open window with the sleeping child in her arms. Outside stood one of the King's gentlemen, who asked her to let him hold the Prince. She agreed, and the boy was thrown in fun from one to the other several times. Then the lady missed her hold, and the poor baby falling on to a marble step, broke a rib. In terror they strove to hide what had happened; but the child sickened and died in agony, and then the whole story came out.

The poor old King, mad with grief, seemed to think it was all Jeanne's fault. He declared that she should never be Queen of Navarre, and was only appeased when she promised that if she had another son he should be given over entirely to him. A year later she gave birth to the child who was to be the famous Henry of Navarre and "*Henri Quatre*" of France. Strong and vigorous from his birth, the boy was almost worshipped by his grandfather, until the latter's death, two years later, made Jeanne Queen of Navarre.

Well indeed was it for her that she possessed a

strong will and an inflexible purpose, for a hard time lay before her. The death of her father left her free to carry out a long cherished intention to openly declare her faith in the creed of the Huguenots.

This cost her the love and loyalty of her weak-willed husband, who was persuaded by Catherine de Medici, Queen of France, and the determined upholder of the Catholic cause, to try to get a separation from Jeanne, on the understanding that his next wife should be Mary Queen of Scots. At first the young Queen was overwhelmed with grief and horror, and roused herself to plead fiercely for herself and her son; but when she was forced to realise the selfishness and worthless character of Antoine de Bourbon, she said farewell to him with a breaking heart and returned to Navarre, determined to bring up her child to be a better man than his father.

Her life-work henceforth was devoted to the Huguenot cause. The outbreak of bitter persecution in France brought thousands of refugees to the Court of Navarre, where they were always sure of help and protection; and as the days of cruelty and misunderstanding grew darker in the land, so did the young Queen brace herself the more to fulfil her task.

In 1562 the weak and fickle Antoine de Bourbon died, professing himself on his deathbed to be of his wife's religion. From henceforth Jeanne stood alone against the great Catholic forces which were fighting, not so much for their faith as for their politics. She was only thirty-four when her

husband died, but she never thought of marrying again, or made any effort after that life of domestic happiness which as yet had never been hers. Her one watchword was, "For the Cause!"

But in the year 1569, after the terrible defeat of the battle of Carnac, the Huguenot cause seemed lost. The great Prince of Condé had fallen, and there was no one to lead his disheartened followers. Coligny, the Admiral of France, came forward in Condé's place, but when he arrayed his troops in order for battle, he saw by the despondency of the soldiers that they had lost all confidence in themselves, and were on the verge of a general panic.

But one day, as the men were gloomily bestirring themselves to obey the call to arms, the trumpet sounded a new arrival in the camp. Down the field in the midst of the lines rode the Queen of Navarre, with a gallant boy on either hand. The Huguenot leaders gathered round her, the men roused themselves from their apathy to give a shout of welcome as she halted to address them, with one hand upon the shoulder of Henry of Navarre, a bright-faced boy of fifteen, while with the other she pointed to young Henry of Condé, son of the late Duke.

"Children of God and France!" she cried, "Condé is no more. That Prince who so often set you an example of courage and stainless honour has sacrificed his life in the most noble of causes! Instead of receiving from my hands the laurel wreath which would have been the just reward of his valour, his brow now shines with a crown of everlasting

glory. Soldiers, you weep! But tell me, does the memory of Condé demand nothing more than tears? Will you be satisfied with empty regrets? No! let us unite—let us recall our courage—to defend a cause that can never die, and to avenge him who was its most illustrious supporter. To the brave soldiers who have fought for this cause now I add my son. Prove ye his courage! The blood of Bourbon and of Valois flows in his veins. He burns with holy ardour to avenge the death of Condé. Behold also Condé's son, whom henceforth I adopt as my own child. He inherits his name and fame. Soldiers! I offer you everything that is within my power to bestow—my kingdom, my treasures, my life, and what is dearer to me than all, my children!"

The whole assembly was hushed for an instant as she ceased speaking.

Then, with a roar and a tumult of cheers, the soldiers pressed around the Queen and demanded to be led at once into the fight. Headlong into the midst of the excited troops rushed the young Prince of Navarre, and with one great universal shout he was hailed as their leader. "Soldiers!" he cried in his clear boyish voice, in answer to their demand, "your cause is mine. Our interests are the same. I swear by my honour and my life I will never abandon you."

Thus by her courage and tact at a most eventful crisis of the great religious struggle did Jeanne d'Albret save the Huguenot cause. For the next few years success met their arms in almost every

encounter, though at the cost of the lives of many of their greatest generals. One of these, however, was saved by the wisdom and womanly tenderness of the Queen. The right arm of General La Noue was fractured by a musket ball, and it became necessary to amputate the limb as an alternative to death. Aghast at the idea of never again striking a blow for France, La Noue refused to permit the operation, saying he would rather die than live a useless log.

In vain his friends entreated him: at length they asked the Queen to do what she could to persuade him. Hastening to the bedside of the wounded man, Jeanne soothed and encouraged him with hopes of future usefulness, while gently rebuking him for his impatience. Still he would not submit, unless she would be present to encourage him during the ordeal. To this she agreed, removed the bandages with her own hands, and cheated him during the whole of the painful operation. Nor did her kindness end there. She had an iron arm made for him, so skilfully contrived that he could guide his horse, and under the name of La Noue "Bras de Fer," he won great renown.

One can but be thankful that the brave and tender-hearted Queen did not live to see the day of the awful Massacre of St. Bartholomew, which seemed for a time to have dealt a deathblow to the Huguenot cause. Only two months previously she was staying in Paris, where a kind of armistice had been patched up between the leaders of the two parties by an arrangement for the marriage of

Henry of Navarre with his cousin Margaret, sister of the French king. She was delighted with the gorgeous reception given to young Henry, and took the keenest interest in the preparations for the wedding.

Just as would be the case nowadays, shopping occupied a good deal of her time, and amongst other places visited by her was the *magasin* of René, court perfumer and, it was darkly whispered, secret poisoner to Catherine de Medici, the Queen, who hated Jeanne with a mortal hatred. Here the Queen of Navarre bought a store of drugs, perfumes, and embroidered gloves. A few days later, on returning from one of these expeditions, she complained of pain and extreme weariness.

Fever set in, but the King's physicians, hastily sent for, failed to discover either cause or remedy. Whispers of poison, administered through gloves, began to be heard, and her attendants were in a state of much agitation and terror. Jeanne herself, however, was perfectly calm, even when suffering intense pain. She seems to have felt very keenly how little happiness had been vouchsafed to her in this life, and to look forward with resignation and even joy to a more peaceful future. Gradually she sank, and with the words "In Thee, O Lord, have I put my trust," ringing in her ears, she passed away.

It was perhaps well that she was spared not only the horror of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, but also the knowledge that a few years later her remarkable son, Henry of Navarre, the hero of Ivry

and of many another fight, gave up the Huguenot faith and became a Catholic in order to gain Paris. We cannot imagine that even the liberty and peace which was at once accorded to the Huguenots by him would have compensated her for what her steadfast, upright nature would have called a breach of honour.

But when these things came to pass, Jeanne d'Albret was sleeping by the side of her faithless husband in the cathedral of Vendôme.

THE ESCAPE OF MARY STUART, QUEEN OF SCOTS

From the painting by Francis Danby, R.A.

MARY STUART, QUEEN OF SCOTS

"Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,
And put a barren sceptre in my grip."
SHAKESPEARE, *Macbeth*

VERY few characters of history have aroused such a storm of controversy as that which has raged round the figure of Mary of Scotland. All kinds of evidence have been produced to show that she was a martyr, suffering in her innocence for the prejudices and passions of her relatives; or, on the other hand, to prove her a beautiful deceiver, full of wickedness within, the destroyer of the bodies and souls of men.

The more we study the story and the documents of her time, the more we are struck with the exaggeration of both views. For Mary was above all things a very human person, full of passionate longings and desires for good as well as sometimes for evil ends.

Her beauty, her high spirits, her generous love for women and children, may have been counterbalanced by her sudden revulsions of affection, and the extremes to which she would go in order to rid herself of those she hated; but it must not be forgotten that if there is such a thing as expiation

for sin in this life, Mary, by her long captivity of twenty-one years, and her violent death in an English prison, did much to atone for the sins of those brief, passionate six years in Scotland.

The life of Mary Stuart is, of course, mixed up almost inextricably with the tangled politics of her period; and since it would be clearly impossible to deal with these adequately within narrow limits, we will only try to get some idea of her life and character by taking a series of glimpses at various critical points of her career.

Mary Stuart was born on the 8th of December 1542, just after her father, James V., had crept away, beaten and heartbroken, from the field of Solway Moss. "It came with a lass, it will go with a lass," he muttered gloomily, as he thought of the unsettled kingdom, already torn with internal strife. A little later, he turned his face to the wall and died.

His wife, Mary of Guise, was too brave a woman to give way under the troubles that thronged upon her with his death. Here she was, a French woman, in the midst of a nation intensely hostile to "foreigners," face to face with the powerful Scottish lords, who hated her for being a "Papist," and her new-born child for standing between some of them and the throne; dreading, moreover, the next move of Henry VIII. of England, whose one aim was to get a grip of Scotland by fair means or foul, and who was already plotting to betroth the baby-princess to his own sickly son, Prince Edward.

So our first glimpse of Mary Stuart, the "most

perfect child in the world," is on board the French fleet, at the age of five and a half, playing happily with four other child Maries, on her way to France to be affianced to the weakly little boy of four and a half who was the Dauphin of that land. The thirteen years which Mary spent at the French Court afforded a curious training for the girl.

The Court was ruled by Catherine de Medici, one of the most unscrupulous and dangerous of women; and the child's fine intuitions and quick wit soon taught her to curb her naturally frank speech and ready impulses, and to wear a cloak of caution and wariness before the scarcely veiled hostility of her mother-in-law. It was during these impressionable years that she must have learnt that love of intrigue and double-dealing of which her enemies so passionately accuse her, and which her friends cannot deny. But it was no second nature with Mary as with Catherine, and assorts ill indeed with the high spirits, quick temper, and frank outbursts of joy or wrath of which we see traces to the end.

Let us take our second glimpse at Mary the Queen in the year 1561. It is a cold misty morning in a "Scotch" August, and Mary alighting from the galley which has brought her across the sea, sets foot once more on her native shores.

Seven months previously, her young husband, an eighteen-months' king, had died; she had worn the *deuil blanc*, the white mourning of France, with the knowledge that life had to be faced all over again; and now the news that since her mother's death Scotland had fast drifted into a sort of Common-

wealth, ruled by her half-brother, Lord James Murray, roused Mary to take her leave of her "fair land of France," and go to claim her own.

But Scotland was taken unawares, and Mary, weary with the strain of leave-taking and journeying, weeps over the sorry nags which are collected in haste to take the Queen to Holyrood. Ill-omened tears indeed, that bedewed the land which within the next seven years was to drive her from its borders.

Mary's high spirits soon returned, however. She was but nineteen, queen of one fair realm, and next heir to its sister kingdom across the Cheviots. It mattered little to her that Elizabeth, her cousin, had offered her a direct insult in refusing to grant her a passage by way of England, or that John Knox was stirring the minds of the "godly men" of Edinburgh against a queen who went to mass as naturally as to her morning meal. Already those same men were feeling the influence of her ready smile and gracious words. "I think there be some enchantment whereby men are bewitched," said one long-faced lord to another who had been won against his will by the charm and grace of his young mistress.

She made a valiant attempt to introduce into the Scottish Court a faint reflection of the gay *insouciance* of that at St. Germain. Her four Maries joined Scottish warmth and loyalty to French vivacity; each had her gallant lover, and the young Queen joyously encouraged their love-making. She had no need to conciliate her women. Their affection for her outlived all the sorrows and shame

and disasters of the years to come, and followed her almost to the gates of death itself.

It was her delight to dress these high-born Scottish maidens in her own fine clothes, and the marriage of any one of them was always the occasion for Mary herself to clothe the bride in a sumptuous gown of her own giving.

Hence, with high hopes of a new and prosperous career, Mary laid down the crown of France and took up once more the crown of Scotland. But within a few months the figure of the man who was the evil genuis of the young Queen crosses her path and then again disappears. James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, had been described by Mary of Guise to her daughter as a "glorious and hazardous young man." Fascinating to women, he was very generally hated by his brother peers, who brought against him a wild accusation of plotting to kill Murray, kidnap the Queen, and then get all Scotland into his hands. Very unwillingly Mary signed the order for his imprisonment in Edinburgh Castle. She had already looked into those daring, handsome eyes, and felt a mysterious attraction. With relief she heard that he had broken ward and escaped to France.

Then the dull monotony of Scottish life resumed its persistent sway over the Court again. If a ball was held at Holyrood, it became the subject of angry denunciation in Knox's Sunday sermon; and every new-comer, especially if he carried violin or manuscript in his hand, was scanned with the utmost disfavour.

And amongst these latter was an Italian called Riccio, "a merry fellow and a good musician," who helped to while away many a dull hour, and who, as French secretary, soon became one of Mary's most valued servants.

Our next glimpse shows the Queen at Stirling Castle, whither a gay young lover has now followed her. It is hard for us to see wherein the attraction lay in the weak-willed Darnley, a peevish boy of nineteen, for the gallant, high-hearted Mary in her twenty-fourth year. His birth was all that was fitting; for he was her cousin, and near to the thrones both of England and Scotland; he was tall, too, and not ill-looking, "the lustiest and best-proportioned long man she had seen." Then his youth and evident weakness awoke the womanly side of her. Very unromantically, he fell ill of measles whilst courting her at Stirling, and there he had willing "tendance from the greatest and the fairest" of the land.

But while the Scottish lords under Murray, backed as usual by Elizabeth of England, were doing all in their power to stop the marriage, the rumour of a plot made by them to seize Mary and Darnley on their way from Perth to Edinburgh came to the Queen's ears. Her courage at once rose to meet the danger. Horses were secretly ordered at daybreak, and the whole train, sweeping past the Castle of Loch Leven, where Murray, unsuspecting, lay asleep, reached Edinburgh in safety.

This precipitated affairs. A secret marriage was celebrated, and repeated in public at Holyrood; and

on the surface Mary seemed to have gained all she wished. She delighted to bow her proud head before this undisciplined boy and to offer him "honour, submission, and obedience, as to my husband and my king." But Darnley, vain and obstinate, took it all as a matter of course, and gave nothing in return for the love of a woman who had risked for him her very kingdom. For the marriage was the signal for the open rebellion of Murray and his adherents, and Mary found few whom she could trust upon her side. She herself had no fears. The grim John Knox himself acknowledged that she was the "best man in the country." As for finding help in Darnley, both friends and foes were agreed when they said that "sic a creature could have no long life among this people."

Meantime another Scottish lord was burning to throw himself into the heart of the strife and to aim a blow at Murray. Bothwell hastily summoned from France, took up arms in the Queen's defence. Mary herself rode against the insurgents, and within a few weeks the rebellion was a thing of the past.

Yet the Queen was irritable, nervous, and out of spirits in the days that followed.

Within a few months of her hasty marriage her feeling for Darnley had entirely changed. He was not worth fighting for.

Quite unfit for rule, with no instinct for affairs, he yet insisted obstinately on a fuller share in state matters, and constantly urged his claim to the "crown matrimonial," which would give him equal rights with his wife during her lifetime and un-

disputed succession to the throne on her death. But Mary would not have it so. His boasting, cowardice, and growing habits of intemperance made his presence hateful to her; and a silly, ill-bred insult offered to a French nobleman, sent by the King of France to confer an Order upon him, was the excuse for his exclusion with open contempt from her council-chamber.

The hostile Lords found him, in his angry resentment, a ready tool to use against the wife who was soon to be the mother of his child. What more easy than to convince him that Riccio was at the bottom of all this treatment, that Riccio, whose influence over the Queen was so well known, had conspired to keep him from her councils, where the secretary was of such importance?

Our next picture of Mary Stuart is one of terror and bloodshed. The candles gleam on the silver appointments of the supper-table in the little slip room opening out of Mary's bedchamber at Holyrood, and round it sit the queen, David Riccio, her half-sister the Countess of Argyle, her brother Lord Robert, and her squire Arthur Erskine.

Suddenly in the doorway stands Darnley, with a look half blustering, half terrified on his weak, boyish face. He says nothing, but the hard, fierce eyes and ready weapons of the Lords behind him tell their own tale. The wretched secretary cowers behind his royal mistress, as Ruthven's harsh voice answers her imperious question as to why they have come with the answer—

"We want yon Davie; he has been here long enough!"

At once she turns with scathing tones upon her wretched young husband—

"Is this *your* work?"

Then the lights go out as he grasps her hands, and the table crashes over, and the shrieking victim is dragged outside the door and stabbed to death. And Mary finds herself alone and practically a prisoner.

What were her thoughts that awful night we know not: that a terrible revenge on Darnley formed part of them we are forced to believe. Meantime she set herself to cajole and flatter him into believing that his protection was necessary to her, that he must help her to escape the next night, for that the Lords would never be content with vengeance upon Riccio alone. So at midnight they fled through a gap in the wall, stumbling through the courtyard over Riccio's new-made grave; and there Mary paused for an instant, muttering darkly that "a fatter than Davie should lie as low ere another year was out," while her wretched companion uttered some broken words of regret.

Then came the long ride with the women and three others to Dunbar and safety—a terrible experience to Mary in her state of weakness and overstrained nerves—but the selfish young King thought of no one but himself. He looked round in terror for signs of pursuit, and urged his wife so frequently to ride faster, that at length in scorn "she bade him push on and take care of himself."

This he did, "very thoughtlessly" says one of their followers, and was found by his contemptuous and reproachful little band in the empty castle at Dunbar, waiting impatiently for the meal which Mary, weary as she was, at once helped her women to prepare.

The birth of the child James, three months later, when this storm had apparently blown over, did nothing to reconcile husband and wife. She grew to hate the very sight of Darnley, and taunted him openly with his cowardice and inferiority to such men as "my lord of Bothwell." At the gorgeous ceremony of the christening of the baby-prince, heir to the kingdoms of England and Scotland, the King sulkily refused to appear upon the scene. Mary herself was heard to utter desperate wishes that aught might happen to rid her of such a husband; and meantime the gallant figure of Bothwell appeared more and more frequently at her side.

In our next picture the gloom has darkened still more.

The scene is the lonely and deserted house near the ruined Kirk of St. Mary in the Fields. The King, who had fallen sick of the smallpox in his father's house in Glasgow, had been brought hither in a litter by his wife, in order that he might undergo a course of treatment and be cured of his illness. She had visited him before, and listened with scarcely concealed loathing to his mingled insults and protestations of affection and repentance. And now it is the appointed night, and Mary

goes from a wedding feast to say her farewell to him.

While she sits by the bedside where he lies with his disfigured face covered with a taffetas mask, the servants of Bothwell are piling the powder bags in the vault underneath his room. Once there are sinister sounds from below, and Bothwell, who with two other noblemen had been playing at dice in the sick-chamber, leaves the room hastily to order quiet. The Queen sits on unmoved, talking quite gently to her husband. Once only does her voice harden, as she reminds him suddenly that it is now almost a year since Riccio's murder.

Then Bothwell returns, and she leaves with a hasty kiss and the present of a ring. How one could wish that history had never had to record that faithless embrace, that treacherous gift!

The picture is veiled in smoke and confusion and ruin.

The body of the unfortunate youth, with that of his little "bed-boy," was found next morning at some distance from the house, untouched by smoke or powder. It is supposed that Bothwell and his men had returned after midnight to make sure of their prey by strangling him, as alarmed by the ominous sounds below, he tried to escape from the doomed building.

At once a sinister rumour began to spread abroad. Mary was not one to disguise her feelings, and everyone knew the terms she had been on with the late King. The people of Edinburgh kept up an angry mutter; and midnight voices called upon the

name of Bothwell as that of a murderer in the dark streets. Yet Mary, lost to all sense of danger, was during those very weeks heaping honours of every kind upon the suspected Earl. She at least would stand by him, though only a few months later he was not ashamed to desert her in her time of need.

The next picture is full of wild romance. The Queen, accompanied by a few trusty followers, is riding from Stirling to Edinburgh at noonday, when just where the road crosses a bridge, the jingle of bridles and spurs is heard, and loud cries of "Halt!" No resistance is offered: the attendants are dismissed, the leader of the band of pretended highwaymen seizes the Queen's bridle and rides off with her, while she, in spite of her usual courage and impetuosity, shows neither surprise nor resistance. Off gallop the horses, Bothwell on his great black charger keeping but a pace in front of the Queen's gallant grey; and so they fly through the heather and the whistling wind to the fortress of Dunbar, whither Mary had fled in very different company little more than a year ago.

When Mary Stuart returned from Dunbar to face the world again, she found all Scotland had turned against her. That their Queen should be about to marry a swaggering borderer, freely accused of the murder of the King, was enough for her friends, and far more than enough for those who had always watched her with an unfriendly eye. "God bless your Grace if you are saikless (innocent) of the King's murder!" cried the fishwives in their broad Scots after her, as she

passed them in the street; and the wedding, which took place according to the religion of her Protestant husband, in Holyrood, was a very sorry affair.

A terrible retribution for those mad days of self-will and unbridled passion was at hand. Directly the marriage was over, Bothwell's real nature, his brutality and selfish ambition, seem to have been made clear; for on that wedding-day the newly-wed wife was heard to wish most passionately that she were dead.

Our next brief glimpse shows us the slopes of Carberry Hill, where she and Bothwell had led out their little army against the Lords, now in open and united revolt. The defence of the Queen was a wretched failure. Bothwell had no wish to fight against troops so superior in numbers. His wife dreaded beyond all things that he should come to harm. Delay after delay was set up, and at length, as the hostile Lords approached, she bade her husband flee and save himself at any cost. So he, caring as usual only for himself, kissed her hand, and riding off to Dunbar, passed out of her life for ever; for after taking ship from the coast, he was seized by a Danish vessel, taken to Denmark and thrown into a prison, where in solitary confinement he fretted his proud soul into madness, and so died.

The Queen returned to Edinburgh on that day, lonely and deserted, a prisoner in the hands of her subjects. Two days later she was incarcerated within the island fortress of Loch Leven (June 1567).

The position of Mary Stuart was now most

critical. She stood alone and a prisoner against her kingdom, which was clamouring for judgment upon her as a wife who had murdered her husband. Only the fact that some of the chief men of the land were implicated in her guilt saved her from a public trial. Even those who judged her most leniently insisted on immediate abdication in favour of her young son. At first she held out with all her wonted spirit; but she was not used to imprisonment, and the shock of the desertion of Bothwell as well as her anxiety about his safety had unnerved her. Sick in heart and body, she signed the deed, and the baby-prince was crowned as king in her stead.

But Mary was a hard prisoner to bind. That fascination "whereby men are bewitched" was still at work. The hostile Lords were amazed to hear in the October of her imprisonment that "she had won the favour and goodwill of all the household, as well women as men."

The grim lady of Loch Leven loved and pitied her, and two of her Maries still clung to her; but in two younger members of the Castle retinue, George and Willie Douglas, who acted as pages to the Laird, she found the most unbounded loyalty and devotion. Willie it was, who though but a boy of fourteen, planned and carried out a daring plan of escape, after a previous failure had banished his brother from the Castle. Lady Douglas herself, the Laird's mother, "was of the counsel," and possibly kept her son engaged in talk at the supper-table while the boy, who had deftly managed to get

hold of the keys, slipped out with two cloaked companions, and having locked the doors behind him and scuttled the other boats on the lake-side, succeeded in rowing them to the opposite shore.

What an exhilarating ride through the chill evening air that must have been! It landed Mary in a place of safety, where a certain number of her subjects gathered round her. Gallant they were, but hopelessly outnumbered in face of the grim troops who rose in support of the Protestant king. The Duke of Argyle, her main supporter, failed her at the crucial moment, and the field of Langside ended in absolute defeat.

For the first time Mary lost her head. Turning her horse from the field, and followed only by a tiny band of friends, she fled wildly towards the distant line which marked the Solway Firth. For sixty miles she rode, staying only to snatch a mouthful of oatcake and a drink of sour milk at a cottage door, and once to rest her aching limbs on the mud floor of an empty barn. Her one idea was to flee from the country which had kept her prisoner, and she never stayed to consider what her treatment was likely to be at the hands of her cousin Elizabeth. She was at least a cousin—a sister queen, and she hoped for that generosity of spirit in her which she would have shown herself in like case.

So she hastened across the Solway in a fisherman's boat—and never saw her native land again.

From that moment we may reckon that the real expiation of that terrible year that followed Riccio's murder began.

For twenty years Mary of Scotland was to be a captive, but one who, like an imprisoned wild-bird, was always beating her wings against her cage. Elizabeth treated her ungenerously from the first. In answer to her appeal that clothes should be sent her,—"for I am in a piteous condition, not merely for a queen but for a simple gentlewoman, since I possess nothing in the world but what I stand up in,"—she sent her a pair of torn shifts, two small pieces of velvet, and two pairs of shoes. No wonder that Mary's silence "argued scorn rather than gratitude." Even the messenger who brought the parcel was ashamed, and muttered that the maid who packed the things must have made a mistake.

Then came the long and pointless farce of the Conference at York, which ended practically in a declaration that nothing had been proved against Murray and the Lords on one side, nor against Mary on the other. It was the ill-advised wish of the Duke of Norfolk, moved either by ambition or by romantic love for one he had never even seen, to marry the unfortunate Queen, that condemned Mary to life-long imprisonment. No movement, even of open rebellion, could have so prejudiced her in the eyes of Elizabeth. From prison to prison she was moved, and we can but take a few brief glimpses which show us Mary the woman now that the days of Mary as queen have passed away.

The first shows her to us at Tutbury Castle, guarded jealously by Lady Salisbury, the famous Bess of Hardwicke. A certain Mr. Nicholas Whyte, a visitor of the Earl her gaoler, had conceived

it to be his duty to go in and preach to the royal lady, enjoining on her a grateful spirit both to God and to the Queen of England, and "to think herself rather prince-like entertained than hardly restrained of anything that was fit for her Grace's estate."

This she "very gently accepted," but we can see the beautiful eyes wandering to the dilapidated walls and high windows of her prison as she answers with undetected irony, "that as for content in this her present state she would not require it at God's hands, but only patience, which she humbly prayed Him to give her."

He further inquires what she did all day. "She said that all the day she wrought with her needle, and that the diversity of the colours did make it seem less tedious, and continued so long at it till very pain did make her to give it over."

We next see her removed to Coventry, and there the news of the gallant, ill-fated Northern Rising brought to her hopes of freedom once again.

But the revolt ended in blood, and the Queen relapsed into a sad condition of disappointment and ill-health.

Feverish colds, constant pain in the side, and chronic rheumatism were the penalties she had to pay for lack of proper exercise and fresh air. Her only chance of keeping up was the excitement of conspiracy, and this became the very breath of her being.

In 1571 she was full of the hopes and fears aroused by the Ridolfi plot, which aimed at a Spanish invasion of the kingdom. Its discovery

led to a much more rigorous imprisonment. Her troop of faithful servants was dismissed; the few that remained might not go beyond the gates or speak to other members of the household; and she was not allowed to leave her rooms for any purpose save when Lord Shewsbury, her gaoler, took her to walk in his "large dining-room with himself or his wife in her company."

She herself seems to have wondered that they spared her life on this occasion; but brave as ever, she made no moan for herself. Her one anxiety was for the lot of those whom the fatal discovery had cast off friendless in a strange land. Especially she remembers the boy who had secured her escape from Loch Leven. "As for you, Willie Douglas," she writes, "be assured that the life you risked for mine shall never be destitute as long as I have a friend alive."

Then the long monotonous years rolled on. She had been but eight-and-twenty when her captivity began—a mere girl in years. But now she was ageing fast. The beautiful hair was grey, the face was lined and haggard. Only one of her faithful Maries remained to her. The rest of the once laughing little band were scattered by marriage or death. Mary Setoun was the last to go; and she left her royal mistress only two years before her end, and is thought to have become a nun. The devices for rendering the long grey days less wearisome are pathetic indeed. She delighted in her birds and spaniels, prisoners like herself without realising what freedom had meant. But her great joy in these

years was a charming little grandchild of Lady Shrewsbury. Little Bess Pierrepoint was her bed-fellow and constant companion, bred up by her to every courtly accomplishment, and dressed by her with the most loving care.

Then once more the air grew thick with plots. The Roman Catholics of England naturally looked upon Mary as a martyr to her faith, and also as the rightful heir to the throne. It was impossible, in spite of the most rigid precautions, to keep her entirely out of communication with the outer world. Walsingham indeed gave her ample means to do so, in order that she might commit herself, and so hasten the inevitable end. Although removed under apparently much stricter ward at Tutbury, letters were constantly passing into the Castle, concealed in water-tight boxes, which were placed in the beer barrels brought in for her little household, most of which passed through Walsingham's hands.

Then a young Catholic gentleman, Anthony Babington, took up her cause. When matters had gone far enough, he wrote her a fatal letter, explaining in detail the plans for the projected invasion of England, for her rescue, and for the assassination of Elizabeth. This, too, was read by Walsingham's spies, and the answer was all their hearts could wish.

Another gallant gentleman went to swell the long list of those who fell as victims to their fascination for Mary Stuart—Riccio, Darnley, Bothwell, Norfolk, and now unhappy Anthony.

But the end had come for her as well as for him.

Removed to Fotheringay, and kept in utter

ignorance of what had been done or of how much had been really discovered, the ensuing days must have been a nightmare to Mary. But when she was brought face to face with the Commissioners sent to Fotheringay in order to secure a verdict of "guilty" against her, the old high spirit broke forth. Holding up before them a ring which she took from her finger, she cried to her judges and accusers, "Here, my lords, is the pledge of love and protection which I received from your mistress. Look well at it. It was in reliance upon this that I came amongst you. Nobody knows better than yourselves how this pledge has been kept."

A ghastly interval elapsed. Sentence of death had been pronounced, but it remained to be seen whether Elizabeth would dare to carry it out. Still the monotonous days went on, and nothing more happened. And then of a sudden came the end.

The Queen had been ill with worry and anxiety, but she met the two noblemen who brought the fatal message with perfect composure. Quite bravely she said that "that soul was unworthy of the joys of heaven for ever whose body would not in this world be content to endure the stroke of the executioner for a moment." Then came a pause—and then, being but a woman though a brave one, "she wept bitterly and remained silent." They left her with a warning that she must be ready next morning at eight.

She set to work at once to cheer the drooping spirits of her "little flock," as she lovingly called her few companions. She insisted that they should join

her at supper, and afterwards carefully divided her jewels and clothes among them.

It was two o'clock in the morning before she was ready to take her rest. One of her ladies was asked to read her to sleep as usual from the Lives of the Saints, and was bidden to choose the life of a saint who had once been a great sinner. She faltered, and the Queen herself selected that of the penitent thief, saying, "In truth he was a great sinner, but not so great as I have been. I wish to take him for my patron for the time that remains to me. May my Saviour have mercy on me, remember me and have mercy on me as He had on him at the hour of his death."

Her ladies knelt weeping about her room that terrible night, but she lay quiet and still, and seemed to be praying. At six she rose and dressed with great care in petticoat and bodice of crimson velvet, over which she wore a black satin bodice, with a long furred satin train and hanging sleeves. On her head she wore a lawn cap with flowing white veil. Then all knelt in prayer, until a loud knocking told them that the hour had come. With cruel obtuseness, her gaoler, Sir Amyas Paulet, would have turned her servants back and left her to die alone. She was forced to plead with her old winning smile, "Alas, poor souls, it will do them good to bid me farewell, and I hope that your mistress, being a maiden queen, in regard of womanhood will suffer me to have some of my own people about me at my death."

It was grudgingly allowed, on condition that she

answered for them that they would make no disturbance; and so four of her gentlemen and two of her maids followed her into the hall. And within the folds of her long skirt a little dog crept close to his mistress's side.

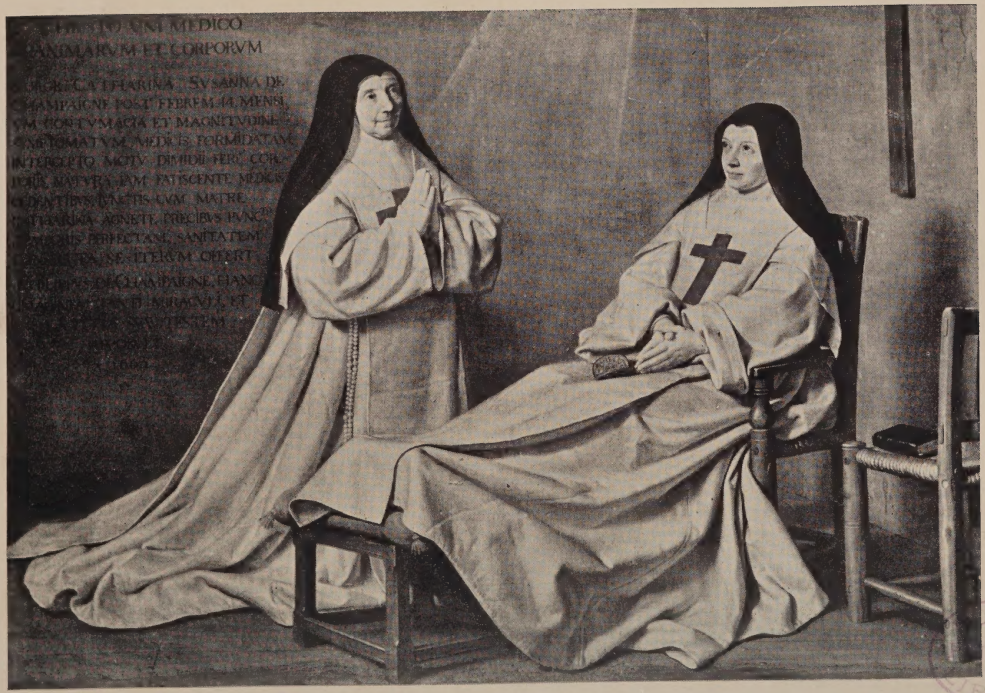
In the hall stood a great platform, hung with black, on which were the two executioners in their black clothes and white aprons, standing before the draped block with the shining axe beside it. The Dean of Peterborough, even in those last moments, tried to exhort her to lay aside her "superstitions," but she replied firmly, "Mr. Dean, I am settled in the ancient Catholic religion, and mind to spend my life in defence of it."

She recited aloud the penitential psalms in Latin on her knees, and when she rose, the executioner approached and put out his hand to help her to remove her outer dress. "Let me do this," she said with a touch of irony mingled with her old graciousness to her inferiors; "I understand this business better than you: I never had such a groom of the chamber." Her sobbing women drew near, but she quieted them with a finger on their lip and a word, "Don't cry; I have promised for you." Then she kissed them, and stood up in her crimson under-robe, her white shoulders and beautiful neck all bare.

Clasping a crucifix in her hand, she allowed herself to be led to the low block. "*In manus tuas Domine me commendo!*" she cried. Then the axe fell, and from the folds of the motionless body the little dog crept whimpering.

She had found no mercy at the hands of men.

We can but trust that at a higher tribunal her long punishment of twenty-one years' imprisonment, ending only in a shameful death, may have been accepted as an atonement for the sin of her passionate youth.



MÈRE CATHERINE WITH MÈRE AGNES, SISTER OF MÈRE ANGELIQUE

(Showing the dress of the Order)

From the painting by Philippe de Champaigne in the Louvre

MÈRE ANGÉLIQUE

"Virtuous and holy; chosen from above
By inspiration of celestial grace."
SHAKESPEARE, *Henry VI.*

THE name of "Port Royal" is famous in literature and history for many different reasons. It was the headquarters of the "Jansenists"—a sect within the Catholic Church opposed to the system of the Jesuits; it is connected with the famous names of St. Cyran, the great ecclesiastic; of Arnauld, the vigorous opponent of Jesuitry; of Pascal, the learned and witty man of letters; of Nicole, the philosopher, and many another of its band of "Solitaries"; and it gave to the world a famous system of education and of logic. But the name that shines brightest within its ruined walls is that of the single-minded, brave-hearted woman who undertook, in a time of incredible laxity and low moral standard, to reform not only the tone of her own convent, but indirectly that of all similar institutions in France.

As had been the case in England a hundred years earlier, the condition of monasteries and convents in France at the beginning of the seventeenth

century left very much to be desired. Most of these establishments were very wealthy, and it was the custom to try and attract well-to-do novices by the lack of discipline and the luxury of their arrangements.

The nuns passed their time in idleness, and vied with each other in the rich material of their conventual dress. They wore masks out of doors to preserve their complexions, and starched linen ruffs over the regulation robe. They were often too frivolously employed to think of attending religious services, which were held very infrequently, for the priest in charge was generally a better huntsman than ecclesiastic.

But, curiously enough, it was from one of the chief abuses connected with these convents that the movement of reform sprang.

It was the scandalous custom to get appointed, through influence, to the post of Abbess of these establishments, young girls of noble families, quite unfit, of course, to fulfil their duties. This, however, did not prevent them from receiving large endowments, which became the property of their parents during their minority.

It was in the year 1598, when Jacqueline Arnauld was seven years old, and her sister Jeanne just five, that their grandfather announced to them that the King had been graciously pleased to appoint the former to be assistant and successor to the Abbess of Port Royal, and the latter to be Abbess of St. Cyr.

Here was a fine prospect! Off ran the little

girls to announce their new dignities to their brothers and sisters. But presently came time for thought and comment from older members of the family, and this brought Jeanne back to her grandfather's knee, saying, "They tell me, grandpapa, that an Abbess must answer to God for the souls of her nuns, and I think I shall have enough to do to answer for my own, so I would rather not be an Abbess."

"And you, Jacqueline?" asked the amused grandpapa.

"Oh, I will be Abbess," cried Jacqueline Arnauld, "but I will make my nuns do their duty!"

In those words the work of her life was strangely well foretold.

Meantime the two children were sent to different convents to be educated—Jeanne to her own establishment at St. Cyr, where she remained till she was old enough to "receive the veil" and undertake the work of Abbess under the name of Mère Agnes.

Jacqueline, however, did not go to Port Royal for three years, and meantime was sent to the convent of Maubuisson, where she took the veil and became a professed nun, as Mère Angélique. Her installation as Abbess of Port Royal was another instance of discreditable intrigue. The Pope happening to hear of the tender age of the proposed Abbess, refused to confirm her appointment; but her relations immediately petitioned that the office might be transferred from *Jacqueline* to *Angélique*, whom they declared to be seventeen years of age.

A few months later, Jacqueline, then ten years old, was made Abbess of Port Royal.

Port Royal of the Fields, as it afterwards came to be called, was a very ancient convent, containing only twelve nuns, and was situated about twenty miles from Paris, in a wooded valley, with a marsh at the bottom. The rule was that of St. Benedict, and very strict; but it was scarcely recognised in any way. The nuns led a lazy and frivolous existence, held their own property, and dressed as fashionably as the robe of their order allowed. They were more than ready to pet and flatter the child Angélique, and were delighted when her sister Agnes, for some unknown reason, left St. Cyr and joined their little community. The children's parents visited them frequently, and everything was done to make the convent-life as bearable as possible.

But nothing would reconcile Angélique to such a lot. She loathed from the depths of her girlish heart the petty, monotonous life, the silly devices to avoid openly breaking a rule or to obtain some wished-for luxury, the trivial, ignorant conversation of the women by whom she was surrounded. She tried to console herself with reading romances, but these only made her more discontented with her own dismal lot.

When she was about fifteen, feeling she could stand the life no longer, she made a desperate plot to escape from the convent by night, to flee to the Huguenot town of La Rochelle, and to throw herself on the protection of some relations who lived within

the walls. Before she could carry out her plan, however, she fell very ill of fever, caused by the unhealthy marshes of the valley.

Her mother arrived, and quickly carried her off to her home in Paris, nursing her there with such tender care that Angélique began to reflect with shame on the trouble which her flight would bring upon her parents. And so, in chastened mood, she returned to her "prison" behind the doors of Port Royal. But it was no easier to endure than before, and gradually the girl withdrew herself more and more into the world of romance and imagination, resigning herself unwillingly to a life for which she had apparently no vocation whatever. Then, unmistakably, the call came. When she was seventeen years old, and had, one Lent, from very shame, laid aside her story-books for a while, she borrowed a book of devotions from a friend, and after studying it for some time, found herself for the first time deeply interested in the great truths of the Christian faith.

While she was still pondering these things, a stranger monk, passing through Port Royal, preached in the convent chapel a wonderful sermon on the glory of humiliation and self-surrender, which made of the careless, sullen girl from that moment an enthusiastic and devoted religious. It is characteristic of her earnest, sensible type of character that she did not allow her newly found fervour of devotion to carry her to all manner of extravagant practices. She realised the duty that lay straight before her, and said to herself—

"I will reform myself first, and then my convent."

No easy task was hers. Her first idea was, that having taken a vow to observe the rule of St. Benedict, that rule ought to be kept most strictly by herself and all the nuns. This the latter at once opposed. They saw no need of reform. In comparison with many other convents, Port Royal was a pattern establishment. The idea of self-sacrifice and discipline was utterly repugnant to their minds. Finally, a report of fanaticism and imprudence was sent to Paris, which so alarmed M. Arnauld that he immediately sent for his daughter, took her into the country, and there lectured her on the foolishness of her whims and ideas, till she was reduced to silence and despair of ever making him understand her point of view.

He thought he had gained his point, and sent her back to Port Royal, telling the Prioress, whose position rendered her peculiarly sensitive to any measures of reform, that she would have no more trouble with Angélique. He was altogether mistaken. The young Abbess had returned full of zeal and determination, in spite of the angry opposition with which she met.

Only one was on her side, and she was a little Sister called Anne, who as a novice had dragged about in misery with an ulcerated leg, fearing that if the troublesome ailment became known she would not be allowed to take the veil and become a permanent inmate of the house. One day she had come with many tears to the young Abbess, confessed her anxiety, and begged her to have pity on

her. Angélique at once met her confidence with the fullest sympathy. She dressed the wound daily in secret, and never rested till the girl was well and able to take the veil without fear of refusal. From that time Sister Anne was her firmest supporter; but the other nuns, headed by the Prioress, were full of mingled alarm and rebellion at any notion of reform. All they thought about was their own comfort and enjoyment, and they showed their opposition in a hundred petty ways, that at length made Angélique ill with worry and anxiety.

To her relief, however, after a few days of sickness, the Prioress and another nun, who had been most troublesome, came to her bedside, saying they knew too well the cause of her breakdown, and that if she would only get well they would never oppose her again. With these members of the little community on her side, the battle was half won. The fiercest fight, however, raged over the Mother's wish that all private property should be given up and held in common. One by one they came reluctantly to the chapel and laid their possessions at Angélique's feet. But two refused altogether to obey. One of these had to leave the convent. The other, whose whole heart lay in the little garden which she had made her own, held out with alternate tears and sullenness for some months, till, touched by the Mother's patience and kindness, she brought her the key and laid it, weeping, in her lap.

It was a harder matter still to reconcile her own family to what they considered a senseless piece of girlish enthusiasm. Angélique considered the rule

of seclusion, which forbade nuns to see visitors except behind a grating, to be the foundation-stone of the life of retirement which the name of nun implied.

She told her mother this by letter, begging her not to take such restraint amiss. For some reason, Madame Arnauld forbore to tell her husband of what she considered her daughter's new freak, and allowed him to pay one of his frequent visits with her to the convent, and to be, in consequence, overcome with rage when his daughter, sadly but firmly, refused them admittance to the interior of the convent. She begged her father to go to the parlour, where she would see him behind the grating and explain all; but he only overwhelmed her with reproaches, and ordered her to deliver to him her two younger sisters, Agnes and Marie Claire, then in her charge, intending to force an entrance the moment the gates were opened for them to pass out.

Angélique prevented this, however, by sending them out by a back door; and Agnes only increased his fury by gravely giving him a long list of reasons in support of her sister's conduct. The miserable scene was ended by Madame Arnauld turning her back with determination on the convent gates; but M. Arnauld, fiery of speech yet warm of heart, returned after a few steps had been taken, rushed into the parlour, and finding Angélique behind the grating, cried pathetically, "Farewell; and if you have any love for your heartbroken father, take care of your health, and do not kill yourself with austerities."

This unexpected kindness made poor Angélique quite break down. She sank, sobbing and fainting, to the floor in a kind of fit, which so terrified her father that he never attempted to oppose her again. So his determination that she should take the veil for worldly reasons was curiously overruled for good; for in the course of years all his other five daughters, with some of their children, and his own wife after his death, became devout inmates of Port Royal.

"I will make my nuns do their duty!" So had said the seven-year-old Jacqueline; and the little Mère Angélique at the age of eighteen was determined to carry out her scheme of reform. She was wise beyond her years, for she made no sudden changes, and always led the way to the sacrifice herself. Thus she lived for months without meat before she revived the old rule of a purely vegetable diet. She declined conversation during certain hours of the day for some time before enforcing the rule of silence at fixed hours, and the refraining from idle chatter at all times. She substituted coarse earthenware cups and plates for the porcelain table services, and serge for the fine linen used by the nuns for their underclothing. Embroidery frames and tapestry needles were packed away, and the nuns began to busy themselves in making clothes for the poor, nursing the sick, and teaching the children sent to them for education.

All this movement of reform represented the hard and unceasing work of eight long years; and when Port Royal had acquired the reputation of a model convent with a model head, the General of the

Cistercian Order determined to extend Mère Angélique's influence in another direction.

The convent of Maubuisson, where Angélique had lived as a child, was ruled over by a woman named Madame d'Estrees, who made no pretence of living the life of a nun, and had encouraged those under her charge to lay aside every vestige of the religious life.

They knew nothing whatever of the faith which they professed. Most of their days were spent in playing cards, and their evenings in dancing with the monks of a neighbouring monastery. They were not really vicious women, but hopelessly ignorant, and content to lead an easy life without troubling themselves about this world or the next. Finding that remonstrances had no effect on the worldly and evil-minded Abbess, the General at length resorted to violent measures, sent down a body of archers, and forcibly removed the lady to a penitentiary.

It was to the difficult task of succeeding this wretched woman that Mère Angélique found herself called at the age of twenty-seven. The nuns dreaded her arrival; and she, accompanied by her young sister, Marie Claire, and two other Port Royal nuns, entered the convent of Maubuisson with fear and trembling. She found herself among well-known faces, however, for several of the Sisters had been her companion-novices; and to their astonishment she at once embraced them, and called them by the childish names of former days. Still they regarded her with shrinking dread, as one who had come to deal out punishment with no

sparing hand, and they could scarcely be made to understand that she wished to rule them by love, not fear. Once again she began by setting them an example of self-surrender. She would not go near the richly furnished apartments of Madame d'Estrees, but took up her abode in the smallest and darkest cell, while her bed was a mattress of straw, without any covering save her robe of religion.

To the amazement of the nuns, she sent away the servants, and helped to sweep, dig, wash dishes, and clean floors herself; and first and foremost she insisted upon the observance of the rule of seclusion, of which some of them had never even heard.

It soon became evident that the wretched tone of the place must be raised by a large admixture of outsiders. Her reputation had already brought a crowd of novices to the doors of the convent. From these she chose thirty, whom, with the help of her Port Royal nuns, she trained in religion and in habits of order and self-discipline. Gradually some of the older nuns were won over by her patient kindness, and all seemed to be progressing well on the road to reform.

Suddenly one day, as the young Mother was passing from one part of the convent to another, she came face to face with Madame d'Estrees. Her astonishment may be imagined, but she received her with respect, and when ordered roughly to take the late Abbess to her old apartments, quietly led the way thither. But Madame d'Estrees found, to

her extreme annoyance, that her rooms had been stripped of all their fine hangings and converted into a hospital for the sick nuns. Venting her disgust in no measured terms, she bade Angélique order dinner for her; and the latter gladly departed, much exercised as to what this proceeding implied.

She discovered later that the wretched woman, having escaped from her penitentiary, had been admitted by an accomplice within the convent walls, and even at that moment had confederates in the shape of her worthless brother-in-law, the Count de Sanzé, with his followers, waiting outside the gates to restore her to her old position by force. Scarcely had Angélique finished her frugal meal with the novices, than Madame d'Estrees sent for her and ordered her to depart at once from the convent. To this she quietly replied that she could not go until her superiors ordered her to do so. In vain her adversary threatened and reproached her. The young Abbess was quietly but firmly determined.

The time came for evensong, and everyone went to the chapel. In the midst of the service, as Angélique knelt at her stall, one of the nuns suddenly threw open a side door opening on the outside wall of the building, and Madame d'Estrees, seizing her rival by the arms, endeavoured to push her through the doorway. Some of the novices rushed to Angélique's help, and not handling Madame d'Estrees as gently as they might, the latter screamed for aid. Immediately the Count and his men rushed into the chapel with drawn

swords, and failing in their attempt to terrify the Abbess into flight, proceeded to drag her out by force. Most of the novices and some of the elder nuns rushed out after her before the door could be closed, and clinging to her robe, besought her not to leave them.

Bidding them be of good cheer, for God was on their side, the Abbess placed the thirty helpless, homeless women two and two; and so, in solemn and not undignified procession, passed with them into the nearest town, and entering the first church to which they came, took up their abode there and awaited events. The inhabitants quickly made themselves acquainted with the whole affair, and public opinion was strongly on their side. A house was offered to them; food and furniture was placed at their disposal; and the little band of religious were soon settled in, and keeping their rule as usual.

The evil reign of Madame d'Estrees was not a long one. A body of troops was sent to remove her, but these she managed to elude by concealing herself in the neighbourhood of the convent.

Meantime the General of the Order insisted that Angélique and her nuns should return. The nuns were terrified, for none knew when Madame d'Estrees, thirsting for revenge, might not descend upon them; and her followers were still on the alert, roaming round the convent by night, firing through the windows, and keeping the poor women in a state of nervous dread that can be readily imagined. They implored that a guard might be set; but Angélique

would not hear of it, bidding them trust in God rather than in man. At length, Madame d'Estrees was taken and put into prison; from thence, on her release, she sank into a condition of utter degradation and misery, and never troubled Maubuisson again.

The five years in which Mère Angélique ruled over this convent were those of incessant toil, worry, and anxiety, and she was thankful to find at the end of that time that a new Abbess was appointed and that she might return to Port Royal.

She had little earthly reward for her labour of reform, for her successor was by no means of her mind, and began at once to cavil at part of her work by grumbling at the number of novices without dowry whom Angélique, caring more for character than riches, had admitted. "Madame," replied the Abbess with spirit, "if the wealthy convent of Maubuisson cannot afford to support these poor Sisters, the little community of Port Royal will gladly receive them."

So the gates of Port Royal were thrown open to thirty nuns and novices, with Angélique at their head, by those who had first learnt to despise earthly riches from the teaching and example of their Mother.

Mère Angélique's work of reform was by no means finished. She visited and personally superintended several other convents of the Cistercian Order, restoring the ancient rule, and reorganising their management, until at length her fame was so widely spread that the number of novices who applied for

admission to her own domain at Port Royal completely overwhelmed its slender resources. The house was very unhealthy, small, badly built, and full of miasma from the marshes close by.

At this crisis, Madame Arnauld, now a rich widow, presented them with a beautiful house and grounds in Paris. Chapel and cloisters were added by wealthy friends, and in 1625 Port Royal of Paris became the headquarters of the community, which now included the whole of the female side of the Arnauld family. This change was not altogether advantageous. The Port Royalists, under Angélique's sane and healthy direction, had been noted for their sober, common-sense piety. The atmosphere of Paris, and the influence of a different order of priests upon the nuns, tended to introduce a kind of extravagant fervour into their devotions, which led to many superstitions and much want of balance.

It may have been from this cause, or possibly because, in her humility, she did not feel she was the right person to cope with this new spirit, that Angélique, having obtained permission from the Crown for the convent to elect an Abbess every three years, now resigned her office. The path of the active reformer who has laid aside her authority is no easy one. The new Abbess, Mère Geneviève, not only proceeded to undo most of the work of twenty years by restoring a style of luxurious living, but altered the whole tone of the place by throwing open the chapel to the public, engaging popular preachers, introducing gorgeous ceremonial, and

worst of all, limiting her novices to those who possessed wealth and were of noble birth.

It was hard to look on and see all this, but harder still to endure with meekness the personal treatment that Angélique now received. Forced to become a novice again after her twenty years of rule, that she might "learn how to obey," obliged to wear a paper mask in token of her "hypocrisy," led round the refectory with a basket of filth tied to her neck as an emblem of her "perverse mind," made to listen to an utterly false record of her own life in perfect silence, she learned to drink the deepest cup of humiliation.

Possibly, in her warmth of religious fervour, such an experience was to her a spiritual joy. She seems, at any rate, to have accepted it with the utmost resignation, since a word of complaint from one so closely allied to the chief benefactors of Port Royal, one, too, who was so highly esteemed by the Archbishop of Paris, would, we imagine, have been enough to bring this apparent persecution to an end.

After about three years of this treatment, Angélique was appointed Abbess of the new convent of the Holy Sacrament, but she soon found that even the degrading penances of Port Royal were preferable to being head of an establishment where she had scarcely any real authority, where a life of ease and comfort for ladies of high rank was the one aim, and where the Prioress was her open adversary.

She endured this for a time, but finding that reform was quite hopeless, she at length obtained

leave to resign in favour of Mère Geneviève, and hastened back to Port Royal, where her sister Agnes had now been made Abbess. It was no light task to restore the convent to its old simplicity and restraint, but in their efforts the two sisters had now the valuable aid of the Abbé de St. Cyran, the friend of Jansen, who played so notable a part in the attempt made to substitute a more simple and spiritual form of faith for the elaborate and intricate system of the Jesuits.

From this time Port Royal became the head-quarters of the Jansenist doctrines, and they were supported most warmly by the members of another community who now claimed to be also recognised as Port Royalists. The deserted valley of Port Royal of the Fields had been taken possession of by a little company of "Solitaries" during the absence of the nuns. They were men of the world, bound by no vow, who wished to live a life of poverty and self-denial, and numbered among themselves Arnauld, the brother of Angélique, a brilliant speaker and writer, her three nephews, the celebrated philosopher Nicole, Pascal, the witty and spiritual writer of the *Provincial Letters* and the *Thoughts*, and many other distinguished men.

Filled with that spirit of charity and reform which Angélique had left within the ruined walls of the convent, these recluses set to work to rebuild the house, drain the valley, and establish schools for rich and poor. One distinguished physician attended the poor in the neighbourhood; others passed their time in digging, building, or teaching. Their

schools soon became so famous that they had to refuse admission; and their reputation, together with the fact that they held and taught openly the doctrines of "Jansenism," quickly brought upon them the hatred and jealousy of the Jesuits.

This is not the place to tell the interesting story of the struggle between them, nor of how St. Cyran was imprisoned for his zeal and died soon after his release. The Solitaries only enter the life of Mère Angélique in so far as they helped to make the name of Port Royal still more famous. It became noted especially for the education given there, in the girls' schools managed by the nuns in Paris, and in those for boys in the valley, and for the literary ability shown by both sides of the community.

In 1648, when Mère Angélique was nearly sixty years of age, she obtained leave to depart from the crowded convent in Paris and to return with a tiny band of nuns to her first home at Port Royal. The Solitaries had by this time removed to new quarters on the edge of the valley, and they, together with the poor of the neighbourhood, united in a hearty welcome to the returning branch of the community. They came just in time to relieve by their charity the terrible distress caused by the War of the Fronde in the neighbourhood of Paris and Port Royal. When the hedges were full of starving people, and all was plunder and pillage, it was to the Port Royalists that the peasants instinctively turned.

"Our domitories and the chapter-house are full

of horses," wrote Mère Angélique; ". . . we concealed as many of the peasants and their cattle as we could in our monastery, to save them from being murdered and losing all their substance. Our laundry is thronged with the aged, the blind, the lame, and infants. Our convent is threatened with an attack every day; but God protects us, and we are at peace."

Scarcely had this war ended when another of a different kind began for Port Royal. The rage of the Jesuits against the growing and influential Jansenists showed itself in a furious attack made upon the whole party. An order was made that the Solitaries were to be expelled and their schools closed, and scarcely was this done when a threat of similar treatment was received at the convent.

But Port Royal, as far as the nuns were concerned, was saved by a very curious and apparently miraculous occurrence.

Much controversy has raged round the Miracle of the Holy Thorn, but one thing at least is clear concerning it. A little pupil in the Paris community, suffering from what was then considered as a hopeless disease of the eye and nose, was cured in a marvellously short time, and, as was reported, by the touch of a thorn from Our Lord's crown, which had been brought by a priest to the convent.

The apparent miracle was closely investigated, and was received by a large number of people as a clear mark that Heaven was on the side of the Port Royalists. Probably there is a medical explanation

of the matter which was unknown to the science of those days, but at any rate it came in time to save the convent for a while. It brought with it, moreover, a tide of popularity and celebrity which was extremely dangerous, and against which Mère Angélique uttered a most decided protest. It was of no use, however, and she was obliged to be content to keep the country branch of the community within more restrained limits.

But the storm was only averted for a while.

When Angélique was in her seventieth year, an order arrived condemning the Port Royalists, who had unanimously refused to retract their doctrines, and ordering all scholars and novices to be sent away from both the Paris and country convents. An urgent message summoned the aged Mother to Paris. Taking a solemn farewell of the troubled little band of nuns, she left Port Royal of the Fields, and was carried in a litter to the larger establishment, which she found in the greatest confusion and distress. Crowds of young novices and pupils pressed round her, imploring not to be sent back to the world of which they knew so little. "Keep us even as servants!" they cried. But Mère Angélique answered with her usual sunny faith, "What mean these tears, my children? Have you no faith? Trust in God and fear Him only, and all will go well."

Calmed by these brave words, they began sorrowfully to disperse, not realising how the departure of each of them was tearing at the heart-strings of their Mother. One of their parents, indeed, compli-

mented Angélique on the courage with which she bore her troubles.

"Madame," she replied, "when there is no longer a God in heaven, I shall begin to lose heart."

A time of great anxiety, constant worry, and harassing business arrangements now began, which in a month's time proved too much for her worn-out frame. She fainted one day on leaving chapel, and was carried to her bed, from which she never rose again.

During the two months of agonising illness that followed she never ceased to carry on her work. She had always been a quick, energetic woman, so vehement indeed in her ways that many people were startled and repelled. But to the poor and timid and penitent, Mère Angélique was the gentlest of mothers, and so she was found during this time of anxiety, as she lay directing the affairs of the convent from her sickbed. At length the end grew very near. Her last effort was to dictate a letter to the queen-mother, explaining the position of the Port Royal nuns and their reasons for refusing to retract their principles of faith—a letter so clear and forcible that the Court would not believe that it came from the brain of a dying woman in the midst of terrible suffering. "Now," she said, when it was finished, "my earthly business is done."

She died in the days of impending ruin and desolation for her beloved Port Royal; but her words were true.

Her work had been done, and well done. The example of Port Royal had raised the moral standard

of all the convents in France, besides restoring the ancient Cistercian rule to its former high position. Moreover, the influence of the devoted Mère Angélique had made the name of Port Royal famous throughout Europe for self-devotion and discipline, as well as for intellectual excellence. She had "made her nuns do their duty," and though Port Royal passed away, the name of this brave and steadfast nun will be recorded among those of all famous women.

MARIE THÉRÈSE, QUEEN OF HUNGARY AND EMPRESS OF GERMANY

"Whom neither shape of anger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray."
WORDSWORTH, *The Happy Warrior*

THE news of the birth of a little Princess of the house of Hapsburg in 1717 was received by her father, the Emperor Charles VI., with undisguised dismay. For a royal Prince had been earnestly hoped for, who would succeed without opposition to the various kingdoms combined under the empire of Germany, and would use his sword if necessary against those who stood in his way.

The very thought of a girl being placed in such an exalted and dangerous position was alarming; for in those days Europe was in a most unsettled state. Kingdom was watching kingdom with greedy eyes. France was always on the lookout to enlarge her territories, Russia was a dangerous, Poland an uncertain neighbour for Germany; and the unusual fact of the succession of a Queen would give all these countries an opportunity to try and

seize some part of her possessions or to contest her right to succeed to them at all.

So the Emperor looked sadly into the future, and hoped in vain for a sturdy son. By the time the little Marie Thérèse was seven years old, however, her bright little mind and determined character had convinced her father that his daughter would be no weak and frightened woman to give way before the first attack of her foes, but would be one to be reckoned with by both enemies and friends. So he began to do everything in his power to safeguard her interests, and when he at length hit upon the settlement known as the "Pragmatic Sanction," it seemed as though her future would be fairly well assured.

By this agreement the right of a woman to succeed to all the different parts of the empire was distinctly declared to be the law of the land, and all the most powerful European countries—England, Spain, Russia, Prussia, Poland, and France—after much bribery and haggling over terms, promised to uphold the succession of the young Princess.

When she was nineteen, Marie Thérèse married Francis, Grand Duke of Tuscany. The marriage proved most happy, and although Francis seems by nature to have been more fitted to take the second place, his brilliant wife never ceased to put him first in her own mind and to fight her hardest for his position and his rights.

But in the year 1740, when Marie Thérèse, now twenty-four years of age, succeeded to the throne, there was no thought of fighting. Tall and finely

made, with an oval face, thick golden hair, a nose slightly aquiline, and clear bright eyes, the beautiful young Queen thought more of dancing and courtly entertainments than of the sword and the battle-field. Her people of Vienna, the seat of the Austrian Court, almost worshipped her; and indeed her bright, lively manner, her generosity, her quick recognition of kindness, and withal her majestic appearance, made her a Queen for whom it was a joy to live and die. There was no whisper of trouble in the air, but rather such a sense of security that the Imperial army had been largely reduced.

Among the foremost to congratulate her on her accession, with many promises of friendship and support, had been Frederick, King of Prussia, known to us as Frederick the Great. Now the kingdom of Prussia owed its very existence to the timely help of the late Emperor, so that it was small wonder that Frederick should have been one of the first to offer his alliance and fealty. Imagine, then, the horrified surprise of the Empress when like a thunderclap the news arrived that, little more than a month after her accession, Frederick had marched a large army into Silesia, one of her richest and most important provinces, and was prepared to take it by force.

Before she could realise the truth, a Prussian ambassador appeared at the Austrian Court, and being admitted to the presence of the Grand Duke Francis, brought a proposal from his master that the whole of the provinces of which Silesia was

composed should be given up to him, in return for which he would protect the other Austrian dominions from attack.

"What!" cried the Austrian secretary, when he heard of this barefaced demand, "this fellow's father had to present to the Emperor the basin for washing his hands, and now would the son dictate terms to the daughter!"

The ambassador had also brought a private letter for Francis from Frederick, in which the latter pressed him to use his authority with his wife and get her to agree to his demands, urging the terrible consequences that would otherwise ensue, and ending with the words, "If the Grand Duke wishes to ruin himself, let him refuse."

For the moment, Francis, loth to embroil the newly made Empress in war, hesitated. "The Queen will never make disgraceful terms!" exclaimed the Chancellor, who stood by; and the offer was promptly rejected.

And thus began the terrible Silesian War. The Queen was more than ready,—her great wish, indeed, was to command her armies in person,—but she did not realise the inadequacy of her numbers, nor the strength of Frederick's troops. Everywhere the Austrians were defeated, and Silesia was soon in Prussian hands. An attempt to drive them out ended in such a disastrous defeat at Mollwitz in 1741 that the way to Vienna lay open to the foe, the Viennese fled from the city, and the Imperial family, with the treasure and the archives of the Court, were forced to betake themselves to

the castle of Gratz. But this was not all. While the fate of the capital hung in the balance, the great province of Bavaria revolted against Marie Thérèse, and was immediately joined as an ally by France.

Marching into Bohemia, another of the Austrian provinces, they seized Prague, the capital, and declared Charles, the Elector of Bavaria, to be its independent King.

Now this meant not only the loss of a great part of the empire, it came also as an encouragement to other provinces to rebel. One of the largest and most unsettled of these was Hungary, whose people, many of whom were of gipsy race, were famous for their turbulence and restlessness.

It was at this crisis that the pluck and good sense of the Empress shone forth. Declaring that she would be crowned at Pressburg, the chief town of Hungary, she hurried, weak and frail though she was, almost immediately after the birth of her son, to that city. Amid the brilliant coloured dresses and dark wild faces of the Magyar chiefs, she was crowned and robed with the royal robe of St. Stephen of Hungary, whilst an excited and turbulent crowd swayed and muttered outside.

No one could tell that they were not meditating instant insurrection, but with dauntless courage the Queen only left the hall of coronation to mount a great black war-horse, and riding up the Mount of Defiance, just outside the city, she drew the sword with which she had girded herself, and pointed it north, south, east, and west, while in glowing words

she dared the whole world to deprive her of her inheritance. A roar of delight followed hard upon her words. She had won the hearts of the multitude, and as she rode back, smiling at them with pale but firmly controlled lips, she could scarcely advance for the way in which they pressed around her charger.

When the Hungarian Parliament met immediately after to consider their future line of conduct, the young Empress, dressed in deep mourning for her father, took her seat in their midst, and in an impassioned speech threw herself and her child upon their protection.

"The kingdom of Hungary," she cried, "our royal person, our child, our crown, are all at stake. Deserted by everyone, we throw ourselves, as our only support, on the loyalty of these illustrious States."

Stirred to the depths by these words, and by the beautiful pale face of the young Queen, the deputies sprang to their feet, drew their swords, and vowed to devote their lives to her service. In her relief, for the first time Marie Thérèse gave way, and sinking upon her seat, she wept bitterly. But she soon recovered herself, and sealed the allegiance of the shifting, wayward mob outside, when a few days later she appeared once more in the great Hall full of deputies and chieftains, and ascending to a window looking out on the crowded square, held up her baby-son in her arms.

"*Moriamur pro nostro rege, Maria Theresa*" ("Let us die for our King, Marie Thérèse").

Thus shouted the chieftains and the multitudes in the words of their ancient war-cry; and the hearts of the Hungarians were won for ever.

And now the fortune of battle changed. The Hungarian army quickly took the field, and swept their foes before them. The French were driven from Bohemia, Bavaria was ravaged and its Elector harried to an early grave, when Frederick, trembling for Silesia, advanced against Vienna with a huge army. But now the Austrians, with new courage, were on the alert. Forced to retreat and to suffer reverse after reverse, he only awaited a chance of recovering lost ground a little, to conclude a treaty with the Empress. With disgust and anger, Maria Thérèse gave up Silesia to that "evil man," as she called Frederick, but only on condition that her husband should be recognised as Emperor.

Eight years of comparative calm ensued, which were by no means wasted by the energetic young Empress. Her great aim was to knit the disunited provinces of her vast empire together by weakening the power of their partly independent rulers, by trying to enforce the use of the German language everywhere, and by settling German officials in the various States. In this aim she succeeded so far that she was able at the end of eight years to raise a very fairly united army for the purpose of driving Frederick from Silesia—a purpose she had never for a moment lost sight of. With great tact and diplomacy she managed to get the European Powers on her side; England alone deserted Marie Thérèse, her old ally, and joined forces with those of

Frederick. But Frederick was a born fighter, and he it was who actually began the Seven Years by invading and seizing Saxony.

A year of Prussian victory, however, was followed by a period of depression and defeat, in which the Empress seemed to have things all her own way. Then once again Frederick of Prussia got the upper hand; and so the see-saw of defeat and victory went on, until one by one the Allies fell away, and Austria and Prussia were left to fight it out alone. Neither, it seemed, would yield. But at length the news of the arrival of a great Turkish army to the aid of Prussia broke the proud spirit of the Empress, and for the sake of peace she gave Silesia into Frederick's hands.

Two years later, in 1765, the brave heart of Maria Thérèse was almost broken by the sudden death of her husband, to whom she had always been most tenderly attached. He had never taken a conspicuous part in public matters, realising as he did that his wife both by birth and character was far more fitted to guide the affairs of state; but in other ways he had been everything to her. "I have lost in him," she writes, "the most affectionate friend, the most dearly beloved companion during a union of thirty years, and the joy of my life."

For the rest of her life she devoted herself to the interests of her fourteen children. To her daughter Marie Antoinette, married when a child of fifteen to Louis XVI. of France, she wrote regularly every three weeks, letters full of womanly tenderness, mingled with queenly dignity and high ideals.

The one difference which seems to have arisen between her and her son, who succeeded his father as the Emperor Joseph, was about the division of Poland between the various European countries. To her honour, be it said, the Empress strongly opposed it, and only after much difficulty was she overruled by her son and her most trusted Minister. But she signed the deed of partition under a written protest that is worth remembering:—

"When all my dominions were attacked, and I no longer knew where to go that my babe might be born in peace, I stood steadfast on my good right and the help of God. But in this transaction, when not only public right cries to Heaven against us, but also all fairness and common sense condemn us, I must confess that all the days of my life I have never before felt so troubled, and I am ashamed to show myself before the people. Let the Prince (the Emperor Joseph) consider what an example we give to the world, when for a miserable slice of Poland we throw our honour and reputation to the winds. I know well that I am alone, and no longer in health and strength; and therefore, though not without very great sorrow, I allow matters to take their course."

As the Empress grew older, she became even more popular with her people; for their many proofs of loyalty made her put aside that affectation of aloofness that she had at first assumed. The poor adored her, for she never went for a drive without filling her pockets with gold pieces, which she flung to them out of the carriage windows.

On one occasion she delighted the hearts of noble and bourgeois alike by running from the Palace into the theatre close by, just in her ordinary dress; and leaning from the royal box, she gave them in the broad Vienna dialect the news of the birth of a grandson, which she had that moment received. "'Pold' (Leopold) has a boy," she cried, "and, just as a token of remembrance, on my wedding-day—is not he gallant?"

One can imagine the roar of applause with which this *naïve* recital was received.

Even in her old age, the Empress was a hard worker. She rose at six in winter, five in summer, and after attending an early mass, took a hasty breakfast, and worked at the petitions and reports brought to her on the previous day till nine o'clock. She then heard a second mass, spent some time with her younger children, and worked till one, when she ate her moderate dinner. Then came work again till six, when she attended vespers. Afterwards, till eight o'clock, she held her card-parties, to which her ladies were invited in order; then came a light supper of broth; and then she went to bed. In summer she loved to work in the open air, at a kind of improvised desk made of a tray slung round her neck by straps.

A bad carriage accident did much in these latter days to spoil the remains of her once remarkable beauty, but her energy of character, impetuous though kindly temper, and marvellous courage lasted even to her last moments. "You are all so timid," she said to her weeping attendants, as they

stood round her bed. "I am not afraid of death; I only ask God to give me strength to the end." Her last thanks were addressed to her Hungarian subjects, whose hearts she had won so many years ago; and then, with thoughts full of love and longing for the husband of her youth, she cried, "I am coming to thee!" and fell back dead into the arms of her son.

Forty years out of her sixty-four had been spent in incessant toil for her country's good. She had not always acted wisely, perhaps, especially in provoking a long war which impoverished the land without attaining its end. But to Marie Thérèse, Silesia, the "richest jewel of her crown," must not be lost without a blow; and if we blame her rashness, we cannot fail to honour her high ideal of responsibility and affection for all parts of her empire. It was much to the advantage of Europe, too, that she acted as a check on the rapidly increasing power of Frederick the Great. But most of all we honour Marie Thérèse for the high example set by her, in a careless, evil-living age, of the work of an empress, a wife, and a mother.

MARIE ANTOINETTE, QUEEN OF FRANCE

"Rue, even for ruth, here shortly shall be seen,
In the remembrance of a weeping queen."
SHAKESPEARE, *Richard II.*

NEVER perhaps has there smiled upon this earth such a gay and beautiful Princess as the little Marie Antoinette of Austria, and never certainly has there been reserved for a Queen of France such a tragic fate as hers.

During her short life of thirty-eight years she was to know few joys, save those that come from husband and child. Even her friendships were causes of suspicion and unrest. And during her last years she was to drink the cup of affliction to its very dregs—to know disappointment, distrust, unspeakable cruelty and scorn, the torture of seeing her dearest ones torn from her by brutal hands, and at length to die a lonely and disgraceful death.

Even the day of her birth, November 2, 1755, was overhung with clouds of horror. It was the day of the great Lisbon earthquake, when the whole of Europe was shaken with dismay and grief.

Yet the child herself was a most gay, merry little maid, full of high spirits, and so clever that with more

intelligent teaching than she received from the old-fashioned and ill-educated ladies appointed as the governesses of the royal children, she could never have incurred the jeers of the French Court for her ignorance of history and literature.

What she did know, she knew extremely well. She could read and speak Italian with the utmost fluency, and she overcame the other drawbacks to her education by her own determination, when she first came to the French Court. Yet she was a mere child in years when she made her appearance there. A schoolgirl of fifteen, very strictly brought up by a strong-willed mother such as Marie Thérèse, is not often a model of learning, tact, and discretion, yet this was the age of the young Princess when she left her mother's side to become the bride of a shy, awkward, undeveloped lad, who cared much more for his model workshop than for his child-wife.

The change from the quiet, simple life of the Austrian palace to the mass of intrigue, etiquette, laxity, and open wickedness which surrounded the Court of Louis XV. must have been overwhelming. A stiff and stately dame, the Duchess de Noailles, was constantly at her elbow, checking and disapproving at every turn, and it is not surprising to find the lively girl nicknaming her "Madame l'Etiquette" before many weeks were past.

The wearisome and interminable rules of behaviour which surrounded her were certainly enough to drive any girl to open revolt. To begin with, the very fact that the Princess was an Austrian caused the three old aunts of the Dauphin, the sisters of Louis XV.,

to look upon her with much disfavour. They were horrified to hear that on one occasion, when hunting, the Princess insisted on placing in her carriage an old countryman, who had been wounded by the stag, and on driving him back to his own cottage. They were stricken dumb with shame to find the future Queen on her knees beside an aged attendant in her own room, carefully bathing the blood from a wound in his hand, made by moving a heavy piece of furniture at her request, and binding it up with her royal handkerchief. But her pretty, tactful ways soon won the hearts of the good ladies, and it was not from that quarter that a cloud of gossip and intrigue began to gather round Marie Antoinette.

The society of the King's two sisters was far more congenial to the girl, but her marked preference for the younger, the baby-child, Elizabeth, so offended their governess that she began to gather and circulate a mass of absurd and frivolous stories about the Dauphiness, which represented her girlish fun and harmless games with the younger ladies of her train as a criminal want of dignity. At length these reports reached the Austrian Court. Letters of sharp rebuke arrived at Paris from the Empress Marie Thérèse. The girl replied with declarations of innocence, which seem at last to have convinced her royal mother; but still the need of repressing all her natural gaiety and liveliness was constantly impressed upon her.

Fortunately, the marriages of the Dauphin's two brothers, the Comte de Provence and the Comte d'Artois, at this period provided for the Princess

the society of two lively sisters-in-law of her own rank. They set etiquette aside so far as to sup together at the house of the Comtesse de Provence.

They acted plays, performed in fear and trembling lest their escapades should come to the ears of the old King or his sisters. The Dauphin was the only spectator, and he, unwilling and sullen at first, began to be amused at the comic parts, and hence to be upon more familiar terms with the young wife whom he at first had treated with schoolboy shyness.

In 1774, after four years of this odd kind of wedded existence, the old King, Louis XV., deserted by his terror-stricken followers, died of smallpox. The tramp and bustle of the courtiers, rushing from the dead man's ante-chamber to do homage to the new King and Queen, was the first thing that informed the latter of what had happened. Clasping their hands together, the young couple fell on their knees and cried with streaming eyes, "O God! guide us, protect us; we are too young to reign."

No one could weep long at the loss of the wicked old King, however, and the newly-made Queen especially had soon recovered her spirits. Life looked bright indeed to her as she drove into Paris by her husband's side, surrounded by a running, shouting mass of people who never ceased to cry "Vive le Roi!" "Vive la Reine!" from sunrise to sunset. Ancient ladies of the Court hastened to pay their homage to the youthful sovereign, who stood for wearisome hours at their reception, and could not restrain a youthful giggle, barely concealed by her fan, when a young maid of honour of high rank,

whose place it was to stand behind her, seated herself on the floor, safely hidden by the hoops of the Queen and her ladies, and played mischievous tricks, twitching their dresses and making flippant remarks.

But a Queen might not even smile without offence. The old ladies went away, declaring that the young sovereign had "mocked" them openly, and that not one of them would attend her Court again.

This innocent bit of fun was the beginning of a prejudice which quickly took root in Paris against the "Austrian," and though often apparently arrested, was secretly growing with terrible force and strength.

> "Little Queen, you must not be
> So saucy with your twenty years;
> Your ill-used courtiers soon will see
> You pass, once more, the barriers."

So sang an ill-natured jester in the Paris streets, and in the veiled threat which the lines contain we seem to hear a far-off echo of the terrible "Song of Revolution."

Meantime the Queen submitted herself with a fairly good grace outwardly, though with many a private shrug and *moue*. She certainly had a good deal to undergo. The rules of etiquette, even in such a simple matter as dressing in the morning, were so elaborate that no lady-in-waiting might hand the Queen a garment if another of higher rank happened to appear on the scene, and thus the victim of courtly manners was often obliged to stand shivering in the lightest attire, while her clothing was

passed with bows and courtesies from one dame to another.

Every day the royal pair were expected to dine in public before the curious eyes and personal remarks of any casual passer-by of decent appearance who chose to enter the dining-room. Marie Antoinette hated this ancient custom, as well as the practice of being served by kneeling ladies of the highest rank. But her practice of avoiding it whenever possible gave deep offence to the Parisians.

Yet the same young Queen who was accused of levity when she was merely in high spirits, and of disregarding the ancient *régime* when she only longed for simplicity, held so high a standard in the midst of a Court but lately famous for its wickedness, that she would not allow a play to be acted which she thought in any way unsuitable for the young girls of her suite to witness, besides keeping the strictest watch in other ways over their morals and conduct.

The artificiality of the Court life became at times unspeakably wearisome to both Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette. The Parisians were outwardly very loyally disposed. Won by her youth, beauty, and charming manners, they greeted the Queen when she attended the Opera House with loud applause. But there was always a sense of discomfort and discontent in the air, more especially as there seemed no chance of an heir to the French throne. Much to the Queen's delight, therefore, the King gave her the Château of Petit Trianon, a country house surrounded by beautiful gardens, where Marie Antoinette and her ladies dressed as milkmaids and tried to make butter,

and Louis XVI. toiled as a locksmith in his workshop, and reluctantly consented to wash his grimy hands before sitting down to table.

Here the Queen seemed happy enough, though in her heart was that deep longing for children of her own which nothing else could satisfy. She even adopted a blue-eyed peasant child who became entangled one day among the legs of her horses. "Petit Jacques" became the darling of the Queen's apartments, only to develop in later years into one of the most bloodthirsty assassins of the Reign of Terror.

Meantime it was but natural to a young, lively, and high-spirited girl of twenty-one that she should get what amusement was possible out of her narrow life, hedged in as it was by custom and etiquette. Love of pleasure led her into indiscretions, harmless enough, but to be used against her in later years with deadly force.

She adored dancing, and determined to attend the opera balls of Paris with a single lady of her suite, both carefully disguised in dominoes and masks. The King's brothers generally joined her party on arrival, but Louis himself cared little for such festivities, and preferred to go to bed. Naturally outspoken and careless of consequences, the young Queen readily betrayed her identity.

On one occasion, when her carriage had broken down and she had been obliged to proceed in a cab, she exclaimed, "That *I* should have been in a *fiacre*! Is it not droll?" in a voice that all bystanders could hear. The gossip spread itself rapidly through Paris,

and the Queen's mysterious peregrinations, disguised and in an ordinary conveyance, became, with the wildest exaggeration, the topic of conversation everywhere.

No one who really knew her upright character would have listened for a moment to this unkind talk, but unfortunately it was impossible to come into close touch with any of the people themselves, and they never understood either her or her husband. "We always loved the people" were the Queen's touching words during the last months of horror and disgrace, and both King and Queen showed their kindly feeling in a thousand different ways towards those with whom they in any way came into contact. It was about this time that a certain unused room in the King's apartments at Versailles was repaired and decorated at an expense of 30,000 francs, without the knowledge of Louis. When he discovered the cost, he was full of anger and distress. "With that sum I could have made thirty families happy," he said.

It was their misfortune that previous centuries of misgovernment and tyrannical treatment had so completely impressed themselves on the minds of the people that they never attempted to realise that in the persons of this awkward, loutish King and his beautiful young Queen the ancient *régime* had already passed away, and that they would have been the first to welcome any radical changes that would have reduced the Court expenditure and broken down the bars of etiquette which had been erected between themselves and their subjects.

Yet it seemed as though each fresh attempt towards simplicity of living only drew new suspicion upon the Court. During the broiling summer of 1778 the Queen, shut up all day in the close Palace rooms, would come out at night to walk with the Princesses and her brothers-in-law on the terrace under her apartments. The royal musicians provided music, and gradually outsiders from the Park pressed so near as almost to mingle with the royal party.

Nothing could have been more innocent than these nightly garden parties. But they soon became the ground for accusations of indiscretion and undignified behaviour, which the Queen treated with contempt, but which lost nothing when repeated in the lowest slums of Paris.

In the December of that year the Queen's greatest longing was fulfilled. A child was born to her—not the hoped-for heir, but a daughter, Marie Thérèse, always known as "Madame Royale." A son came to her two years later, however, to the unbounded joy of the simple-hearted Louis XVI. "You have fulfilled my wishes and those of France," he said to his wife with a voice choked with emotion. "You are the mother of a Dauphin."

The people seemed beside themselves with delight. All the tradesmen of Paris assembled at Versailles according to their orders. The shoemakers finished off a little pair of boots for the Prince, the tailors displayed a tiny uniform, the masons built him a model palace. Alas for the omen! The grave-diggers were there too, with pick and spade, in a conspicuous position.

Four years later her second son was born, and the good sense of the Queen became apparent very early in her plans for the education of her children. Brought up herself in awe and fear of her mother, she determined to make her little ones love her and to have them with her as much as possible. But that they might never forget the responsibilities of their royal position, she talked to them constantly of the sufferings of the poor, and during one very hard winter taught them to know the pleasure of giving up new toys that the starving babes of Paris might be warmed and fed.

Yet at the very time when the Queen was doing all she could to please the nobility and to help her people, a detestable plot was being formed against her. The affair of the "diamond necklace" is surrounded with mystery, but one thing is clear. It was a plot contrived by some of the courtiers, with a Cardinal of the Roman Church at their head, to convince the people that Marie Antoinette had obtained a diamond necklace of extravagant value without paying the jeweller in whose possession it had been.

The affair was discovered and the ringleaders punished, but with such mercy that the public probably never knew that the Queen was cleared beyond all doubt. Clouds of suspicion began to gather round the royal palace. The Cardinal's party never rested till they had spread abroad their tale of scandal and innuendo. The Queen was accused of unduly influencing the King against those

whom she disliked, and especially against the Cardinal. Passing through her rooms one day, Marie Antoinette heard a servant say, "A Queen who does her duty will remain in her apartment and knit." She laughed sadly, saying within herself, "Poor wretch, thou art right; but thou knowest not my situation: I yield to necessity and my evil destiny."

That evil destiny was pressing hard upon her—harder than she knew.

In 1789 the "States-General," the French Parliament which had not sat for a hundred and seventy years, met together. The King and Queen went down to the opening ceremony; it was the last time that the Queen appeared in public in her royal robes. Threatening words were heard from the *poissardes*, the fishwives of Paris, as Marie Antoinette drove past. The first mutter of the storm was making itself heard.

The feeling of the Assembly was strongly against royalty from the first. Influenced by Mirabeau, a deputation arrived at the Palace at Versailles prepared to detect the King in a chronic condition of gluttony and drunkenness and the Queen living in such unbridled luxury as bade fair to drain the treasury of the State. They were particularly anxious to see Petit Trianon, and, amazed at the extreme modesty of the little house, insisted that certain rooms studded with diamonds, sapphires, and rubies, were concealed from them.

From the day of the opening of the States-General the Queen's troubles began. The Dauphin,

a languid and melancholy child, who seemed weighed down by the burden of the sins of his ancestors, died; and the sole hope of succession lay in his brother Louis, at that time a bright, engaging boy of five years old.

Then the movements of insurrection began. In vain the King tried to arouse the loyalty of the people by attending the meeting of the States-General in his private capacity, announcing to them, "I trust myself to you; I only wish to be at one with my nation, and counting on the affection and fidelity of my subjects, I have given orders to the troops to remove from Paris and Versailles." Even if they were induced by these words to give him some measure of confidence, they never for a moment put aside their senseless prejudice against the Queen.

A rough crowd filled the courtyards of the Palace and greeted the appearance of Marie Antoinette and the Dauphin upon the balcony with groans and jeers. "Tell your Queen not to meddle with government any longer," said a woman, fiercely snatching at the arm of one of the ladies-in-waiting who had mingled with them in the courtyard. "Let her leave her good husband and our good States-General to effect the happiness of the people." But we have no space here to tell the whole terrible story of the Revolution, and must pass over those scenes in which Marie Antoinette herself was not intimately concerned.

In October 1789, the King and Queen, who could not have realised the imminent danger in which they stood, gave a great entertainment at Versailles to a regiment of foreign soldiers, whom they were accused

of summoning as a safeguard against their own subjects.

This event, and the scarcity of bread in Paris, kindled the fury of the fishwives and other women of the city, and they led the way to Versailles, followed by a huge rabble of men and boys.

The Queen was the especial object of this attack. About half-past four in the morning, as the Queen lay asleep in bed, a noise of mingled shots and yells was heard outside the Palace. A maid of honour flew to the Queen's bedside, another opened the door of the ante-chamber leading into the great guard-room, and saw one of the body-guard holding his musket across the farther door and endeavouring to keep out the infuriated mob. Turning his face, streaming with blood, towards her, he cried, "Save the Queen, madame; they are come to assassinate her."

Hastily bolting the inner door, she rushed to the bedchamber, crying, "Get up, madame; don't stay to dress; fly to the King's apartments." The Queen, whose one thought was for her husband and children, flew to his room; but he meantime had gone to her apartments by another passage, and for a moment the shock of his absence almost overcame her. The sight of the little Dauphin and "Madame Royale" reassured her, however, and a message was quickly brought that the King was also safe.

Meantime the yells outside had become so appalling that something had to be done to prevent a general massacre of the guards. The Queen, therefore, went bravely on to the balcony overlooking the

courtyard, holding her two children by the hand. "No children!" shrieked the women below. The King then joined his wife, who expected every moment to receive her deathblow.

"To Paris!" yelled the mob.

With quiet dignity, Louis motioned with his hand, and in a momentary silence said, "You wish, my children, that I should follow you to Paris. I consent, but only on condition that I shall not be separated from my wife and children."

The royal carriage was at once made ready, and the strange procession set forth, amid the yells of the *poissardes* who surrounded them. "We shall no longer want bread—we have the baker, the baker's wife, and the baker's boy with us!"

In front of the carriage were borne in cruel mockery the heads of two of the murdered body-guard, set up on poles.

So Versailles, and the happy days at Petit Trianon, passed away for ever.

One consolation remained to the Queen. Her husband and children were still with her, and after this terrifying experience they scarcely left her side. The day after they arrived at Paris, the little Louis, hearing a sudden noise in the garden, rushed to his mother's arms, exclaiming, "Oh, mamma, will it be yesterday over again?" Then laying his hand on his father's knee, he asked with sad precocity, "Papa, what have you done to make the people so angry with you?"

The King's reply is perhaps the best explanation of his position that history has given us. Taking

the boy upon his knees, he said, "I wished, my child, to make the people happier than they were; and I also wanted money to pay the expenses occasioned by wars; for it is not right that a king, any more than a private man, should not pay his debts. I asked my people for money, as my predecessors have always done; the magistrates composing the Parliament opposed it, and said that my people alone had a right to consent to it. I called together the principal inhabitants of every town in the States-General. But when they were assembled they required concessions which I could not make with due respect for myself or with justice to you, my successor; so wicked men induced the people to rise against us; but the people must not be blamed."

It soon became perfectly clear that Paris was no place of safety for the royal family, and that their only chance of freedom, indeed of life, lay in flight from France. Preparations were made with the utmost care. The Comte de Fersen, a most loyal friend, ordered a travelling-carriage in the name of a German lady of his acquaintance, procured passports, and on the appointed night, disguised as a coachman, he himself drove the royal family part of the way to the Belgian frontier. But fortune was against them in every direction. About twelve miles from Paris the carriage broke down, and much time was spent in its repair. The King insisted on walking up two of the hills, and thus altogether they were delayed about three hours after the time appointed for meeting the detachment of guards which was to escort them from Varennes.

The officer in charge of the latter, seeing that the presence of his troops was causing much suspicion among the countrypeople, thought it best to make them leave the highway and proceed to Varennes by two cross-roads, and thus missed the travelling-coach altogether. Meantime Louis, in passing through a village just before the highroad to Varennes was reached, looked out of the window and asked several questions concerning the road. The postmaster, struck with his likeness to the picture of the King's head upon bank-notes, came up to the window, recognised the Queen, and slipping away, mounted a horse and rode off to Varennes to inform the Mayor that the royal family were in the act of making their escape.

These mysterious movements and the absence of the troops who were to have conducted them into the town, filled the King and Queen with alarm, which was increased by the words of an unknown horseman, who galloped past the window of the carriage, crying out, "You are recognised!"

They reached Varennes to find the town guard up in arms against them, whilst their own regiment was in confusion, newly arrived, and quite uncertain how to act. Their captain rode up to the King and asked if he should effect a passage by force; but Louis, always undecided, and dreading an order that should cause blood to be shed, refused.

The royal family were then hurried to the shop of the grocer-mayor, where the Queen, sitting among the soap and candles, tried every argument in her power to induce his stout wife to persuade

her husband to help them to escape. But she would say nothing except "Good heavens, madame, it would be the destruction of M. Sauce: I love my King, but I love my husband too, you must know, and he would be answerable, you see." Then Marie Antoinette did all she could to delay their return to Paris, in the hope that another regiment might arrive to aid them. It was of no use. They were hurried back to the carriage, where the King was assailed with such jeers and reproaches that the poor Queen, disappointed, weary, and cut to the heart by such humiliations, raised her veil and said to them, "Well, since you recognise your sovereign, respect him."

The wretched return journey was made in the company of two violent demagogues, one of whom was converted to decent conduct by the sad dignity of his fellow-travellers; but the other ate and drank in their presence, and narrowly missed throwing his chicken-bones into the King's face. Then dragging the little Dauphin on to his knees, he began twisting his long fair hair in his dirty fingers with such roughness that the child cried.

This was too much for the poor mother, who snatched her son away with angry words that spoke only too plainly of nerves strained to breaking-point.

In such wise was the royal party conducted back to the Tuileries, where they found themselves prisoners and closely guarded. The doors of the rooms occupied by the King and Queen stood open by day and night, and the ante-chamber between

them was always occupied by an officer who was nothing better than a spy. No wonder that the shock and strain of the failure of their hopes, joined to its immediate consequences, resulted in the change of the Queen's beautiful hair to snowy white. "*Blanched by Sorrow*" was the inscription she sent with a lock of it to the Princesse de Lamballe, her dearest friend, who was destined to die before her.

The next few months saw scene after scene of indignity and insult. The King standing bare-headed like a culprit before his judges, was forced to accept the new Constitution of the State. Scarcely any of their old suite were allowed to attend upon the royal family. Poison was suspected in the food prepared by a furious Jacobin cook, and all kinds of precautions had to be used by the few faithful servants left to them to ensure their safety in this respect.

The King began at this crisis to lose his nerve altogether. For ten days he never spoke, and seemed as though he were becoming physically and mentally helpless. It was only the Queen's love and energy that could succeed in rousing him from this fatal condition by representing to him that if they were doomed to fall they must at least fall with honour and dignity.

On the terrible 20th of June 1792 a crisis came. The King had refused to give his consent to the banishment of priests from France, and a mob of desperadoes forthwith rushed upon the Palace.

Benches placed hastily before a window recess in which the King stood saved him from immediate assassination; and some of the ruffians forced their way to the council-chamber where Marie Antoinette, outwardly calm, faced what she thought was certain death, with a few of her women by her side, and the Dauphin seated on the table before her. For her child's sake, she had pinned a tri-coloured cockade in her hair, and had placed the hateful *bonnet rouge* of the democrats upon her boy's head. They shrieked imprecations at her as they pushed past the table, showing her a gibbet from which hung a dirty doll, with the inscription—

"*Marie Antoinette à la lanterne!*"

One woman in particular assailed her in the most violent terms. The Queen asked her if she had ever seen her before. She replied, "No." "Have I done you any personal wrong?" she asked again. "No," said the woman, "but it is you who have caused the misery of the nation."

"You have been told so," answered the Queen. "You are deceived. As the wife of the King of France and mother of the Dauphin, I am a Frenchwoman. I shall never see my own country again: I can be happy or unhappy only in France. I was happy when you loved me."

The tears rolled down the woman's dirt-stained face.

"*It was because I did not know you,*" she said; "*I see that you are good.*"

Want of knowledge—constant misapprehension—those were the actual causes of the fury of the mob

against their Queen. To them she was not Marie Antoinette, but the emblem of all the tyranny, cruelty, and misgovernment that had turned the fair land of France during a whole century into a country of madmen, thirsting for their rulers' blood.

So the terrible months passed on, until the Queen openly longed for any change, however violent, that would end their misery. Never alone, spied upon by day and night, subjected to frequent visits of insult from the revolutionary leaders and to the cruel mockery of the mob outside, and assailed more than once by secret assassins, the long days of misery dragged on.

At length the 10th of August arrived. The Palace, surrounded by the faithful Swiss Guard, was attacked by the furious Marseillais, who were parading the city with their terrible song and assassinating all those who were known to be friends of the King. An order came from the Assembly bidding the royal family to give themselves up to it for safety.

And thus the palace of the Tuileries was left for the last time. Amidst the bloodshed and massacre of that awful day, the King, Queen, and the royal children were hurried into four little cells of a monastery near by, called Les Feuillans, and from thence to more secure and yet more sordid lodgings at the Temple. In the small tower of this latter building the King and Queen, the Dauphin, the little Madame Royale, and Madame Elizabeth, the King's sister, were

imprisoned, with only one male attendant, from the 13th of August 1792.

It is from the pen of the young Princess, then a child of twelve, that we get a vivid picture of those last sad days. "My father taught my brother geography; my mother history and to learn verses by heart; and my aunt gave him lessons in arithmetic. My father fortunately found a library that amused him, and my mother worked tapestry. . . . We went every day to walk in the garden for the sake of my brother's health, though the King was always insulted by the guard. Our gaoler . . . would sing the *Carmagnole* and a thousand other horrors before us; . . . knowing that my mother disliked the smell of tobacco, he would puff it in her face, as well as in that of my father, as they happened to pass him. He took care always to be in bed before we went to supper, because he knew that we must pass through his room. My father suffered it all with gentleness, forgiving the man from the bottom of his heart. My mother bore it with a dignity that frequently repressed his insolence."

On September 3rd horrid shouts were heard outside the door and window. "My father," says Madame Royale, "asked what was the matter, and as several of the guard had now arrived, one of their number replied, 'Well, since you will know, it is the head of Madame de Lamballe that they want to show you.'"

At these words the Queen was overcome

with horror; for the beautiful Princesse de Lamballe had been her dearest friend. It was with much difficulty that the brutal mob was restrained from breaking into the room with their dreadful trophy on the end of a pike. A terrible night followed.

"My aunt and I heard the drums beating to arms all the while," writes the Princess. "My unhappy mother did not even attempt to sleep. We heard her sobs."

So the days of the September Massacres passed away, and, clinging to one another for company, the sad little family resumed their regular habits, and tried pathetically to rouse themselves to play at games of ball and ninepins for the sake of keeping up the spirits of the little Prince.

But in the beginning of October, after the deposition of the King, they were treated with increased severity, and at length Louis was separated from his wife and family except at meal-times, and then only allowed to see them on condition they talked "loud, and in good French." It was the beginning of the end, and for the first time the brave heart of the Queen began to fail. The trial of the King took place early in December, and during that time he was not allowed to see his wife at all. She entreated that at least his children might visit him; but this was only permitted on condition that they were entirely separated from their mother, and to this the King unselfishly refused to agree.

At length the mockery of a trial came to an end, and Louis XVI. was condemned to die. That last

meeting with wife, sister, and children is too sacred to describe. It was only possible to end it by promising that he would see them again in the morning before he set out to the place of execution. But when day broke, this loving husband and father would not again rack those tender hearts by a last farewell; and Marie Antoinette never saw her husband again in this world.

It seemed as though her cup of sorrow was full, but there were still some bitter drops to fall. The little Dauphin became ill with fever, and for a long time his mother was forced to see him suffering by night and day without being able to obtain either medicine or advice for him. Even when he recovered, he was never the same again. His sister says: "Want of air and exercise did him great mischief, as well as the kind of life which this poor child led, who at eight years old passed his days amidst the tears of his friends, and in constant anxiety and agony."

But worse was to come. In July a decree ordered that the Dauphin should be separated from his family and placed in the most secure apartment of the Tower. Then the cup of agony flowed over, and the poor mother, to whom the child clung with shrieks and sobs, defended him by force against those who would have torn him from her. Only the threat of the soldiers that they would kill him and his sister before her eyes was of any avail. Heartbroken, she unfastened his clinging hands and handed the poor little fellow to the officers, who promised to use him kindly.

What was her horror when she heard that the delicate child was delivered over to one Simon, an infamous shoemaker, to be brought up as a *citoyen*. Death itself would have been better; but merciful death was not to come to him then. From that time the brave and loving heart was broken with grief. "*Nothing can hurt me now*," were the last words her daughter heard her say, as she struck her head accidentally against the low wicket, when the officers hurried her from the Temple to her last resting-place in the Conciergerie, the lowest prison of Paris.

From thence, after her disgraceful trial, she was led on the 16th of October to the spot where her husband had perished ten months before. The Republican David's terrible picture paints her dressed in citizen garb, her beautiful hair cut off, her figure shapeless and bowed. But that picture, painted as an insult and a scoff, shows her in reality as a martyr—a martyr to the ancient *régime*, a victim of the sins of the old nobility of France. Her dignity and inborn courtesy never deserted her. "Pardon me," she said, bowing to the executioner, upon whose feet she had accidentally trodden.

"She ascended the scaffold with a firm and dignified step, as if she had been about to take her place on a throne by the side of her husband," says one witness; and another writes: "She knelt for an instant, and uttered a half-audible prayer; then rising and glancing towards the towers of the Temple, "'Adieu once again, my children,' she said; 'I go to rejoin your father.'"

So perished in the flower of her age the most beautiful and the most unfortunate Queen of France. Her poor little son, after two years and a half of misery and neglect that were worse than death, was the last royal victim of the Revolution. Her daughter lived to marry her cousin, the Duc d'Angoulême, but never to forget those years of horror and bloodshed amidst which she had passed her youth.

MADAME ROLAND

From the painting by Heinsius at Versailles

MADAME ROLAND

"We live in deeds, not years. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.
BAILEY, *Festus*

THE life-stories of Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, and of Manon Roland, daughter of the people and most ardent of Revolutionists, so unlike in most things, so absolutely opposed politically, become curiously intermingled from time to time, and in the end are merged into the same common fate. They never spoke to one another,—their very names were a cause of mutual repulsion and dislike, —yet we cannot help thinking that if the warm-hearted, impulsive young Queen could have met the upright, clear-sighted woman of the people, under perfectly natural conditions, and "talked things over," as we say, both would have learnt much that was profitable, and have come to value the really noble points in each other's character.

But such things could not be in the Paris of the Revolution.

Marie-Jeanne, or "Manon," Phlipon, was born in Paris a year after the birth of Princess Marie Antoinette. Her father was an engraver, a man of violent temper, who seems never to have understood

his high-spirited, clever child, though he was proud enough of her fine intellect and beautiful features.

One of the scenes which the woman of forty, waiting for death in her wretched cell, remembered most clearly was an early contest of will between her father and herself.

She was six years old, and sitting up in bed, feverish and sick from some childish illness, when the gentle, sad-faced mother whom she adored, brought her a nauseous dose of medicine.

The sight and smell sickened the child, but she tried, valiantly though ineffectually, to swallow it. Her mother encouraged her to try again, but as she did so, *père* Phlipon hurried in, decided at once that obstinacy alone was the cause of her difficulty, and administered a sharp whipping. Manon instantly hardened herself, and declared amidst sobs and tears that she would try no more to swallow it. This brought a second chastisement, upon which the child, screaming with pain and anger, tried to upset the glass. Her father, completely out of temper, snatched up the cane for a third punishment; upon which she conquered her sobs, dried her tears, and prepared to receive the blows with Spartan fortitude. "They might have killed me on the spot," she says, in her prison memoirs, "without my uttering so much as a sigh; nor will it cost me more to-day to ascend the guillotine than it did then to yield to a barbarous treatment which might have killed but not conquered me."

From that time M. Phlipon wisely left the proud and sensitive child to the care of the mother whom

Manon idolised. But both her parents seem to have realised with what an exceptional brain their little daughter was gifted, for she was given masters and opportunities for study such as were extremely rare for a girl in her position.

At seven years of age, however, the only books she could obtain were the Missal, the Bible, and the Psalter, to the study of which she turned for refuge during the somewhat terrible hours of the Sunday visits paid to her grandmother. This poor old lady had softening of the brain, but Manon could not understand this, and took it very ill that when she danced and skipped about the room "Grand'mère" always burst into tears, whilst if she grazed her knee or bruised her hand with a fall the old woman gave a hoarse chuckle of delight.

Fortunately for her, Madame Phlipon, besides giving her teachers in singing, dancing, music, and Latin, soon granted her leave to read any book she found in the house. Terrified lest the permission should be withdrawn, the child would slip from her bed at five in the morning, creep to her mother's room, from whence she was forbidden to remove the precious volumes, and there sit lost in a world of her own until roused to a sense of everyday affairs by the moving household. Unfortunately, the little store was quickly exhausted; but the sharp-eyed Manon soon discovered that one of her father's apprentices used to keep a number of volumes hidden away in a cupboard of the workshop.

This workshop was next the big *salon*, a nook

of which, boarded off, was Manon's bedroom and study. From this retreat she would dart out, like a spider on a fly, directly the workroom was empty for a moment, snatch one of the little hoard of books, and fly back to the window-seat of her tiny room, to revel in stories of travel or adventure for hours at a time. Luckily, this bookish apprentice had not only a good taste in literature, but also a warm sympathy with the little student; for he kept her supplied in this way with standard books as far as his slender means would allow, and so was the means of introducing her to the work which became a landmark in her life. When she was barely nine years old she first opened a volume of Plutarch, translated probably by Amyot. This book, with its series of noble lives, its vivid pictures of Greece and Rome, not only opened a new world to the little maiden; it made her a Republican.

Everywhere she went she carried the volume of Plutarch with her; it was her Bible, her Missal, for she could not part with it even in church; and her one great though secret lamentation was that she had not been born a native of Sparta or of Rome.

She never lost the deep impression made by this book upon her childish mind, though she was soon to pass through another and very different phase. Her mother, a woman of quiet and deep religious convictions, probably saw that so tender and impulsive a nature would not fail to be keenly affected by religious experiences. Her confirmation,

at the age of eleven, stirred her to the depths. She read nothing but the Lives of the Saints, and wept because she had no chance of witnessing to the faith of Christ at the stake or at the lion's mouth.

A sense of her own unworthiness overwhelmed her, and when the time for her first Communion approached she could bear it no longer. Coming one evening into her parents' presence, she fell sobbing at their feet in a torrent of tears. "I am going to beg of you," she said, when she could speak for crying, "to do something which grieves me sadly, but which my conscience bids me to do. Send me to a convent." Her mother soothed and comforted her, questioning her as to the reason for her strange request. The child could only say that she felt the need of preparing for her first Communion in the strictest seclusion.

Perhaps the temptation to lose herself at home in the delights of Plutarch was strong upon her; or perhaps the Sunday walks, when she was decked out in bright silk frocks, with crimped hair and frizzled locks, bore heavily upon the strained little soul. Anyhow, her wish to bury herself for a while in religious seclusion away from the world was so sincere that her parents agreed, and she was presently placed as boarder in the Convent of the Congregation, a building which stood next the prison in which she was afterwards to be confined.

This year, passed within the high walls which enclosed a peaceful garden, full of great trees and winding paths, was perhaps the happiest of Manon's life. She tasted to the full the religious rapture

of prayer and meditation and devotion; the organ notes, the chanting of the anthem by the thin, sweet voices of the nuns, to her were unmixed joy. At first she seems to have longed to become a nun herself, but presently a new arrival turned her girlish mind into more natural channels. This was another young boarder, from Amiens this time, named Sophie Cannet, whose tear-stained face as she sat, homesick and miserable, at the supper-table, filled Manon's warm little heart with pity and affection.

The two girls became inseparable. They walked, read, worked together, and vowed an eternal friendship, destined to outlive most childish fancies, lasting as it did, to the very gate of death. Another and more one-sided attachment was also begun here. A poor little lay-sister, Agatha, forced to take the veil at seventeen because she had no dowry, and to perform the most menial offices of the convent, fell in love with the little *dévote*, petted her in every way possible, pouring out on the bright-faced child all the wealth of stifled affection. Through all the long years of absence she never forgot her *mignonne*, but in the dark days before them both, put aside her own cares to comfort her "daughter" in the hour of death and desolation.

After a year at the convent, Manon Phlipon was sent for another year to the care of her father's mother, a jovial, merry little woman, who taught her granddaughter fine needlework and the "art of sentimentality," salted with a somewhat roguish wit. But Manon's devotion to her mother made

her rejoice when at the age of thirteen she was recalled to her tiny study-bedroom and to the noise and bustle of her father's house.

From this time we have a wonderfully vivid picture of her home-life painted for us in her weekly letters to her friend Sophie. These show us also a mind of unusual strength and depth, pondering on the problems of life even in those girlish days. One great truth, at any rate, she managed to hit upon, and for the rest of her life she tried to live up to it. "Let us endeavour to know ourselves," she writes; "let us not be that factitious thing that can only exist by the help of others. *Let us be ourselves.*"

Meantime, while cultivating self-knowledge, she did not hesitate to avail herself of the stored-up wisdom of the ancients. She read everything she could get hold of—Greek and Latin classics, French philosophers—and with her untired mind keen to devour anything new that came in her way, copied out a whole treatise on geometry because she could not obtain it otherwise for her own study.

But she was no untidy "blue-stocking," no dreamy mystic. Healthy and well developed, she was at the age of twenty a very fine-looking girl. Her hair was soft, dark and thick, her eyes deep blue, her complexion brilliant, but changing quickly with every passing emotion. She had her share of girlish vanity, too, and was wont to sigh occasionally over a mouth too large and a nose too thick at the tip for strict beauty.

She loved enjoyment and pleasure of all kinds; but underneath all this was a deep and thoughtful nature, readily impressed by the grave problems of society.

Two events stand out from these quiet days and affect the future Revolutionist with a never-to-be-forgotten emotion. One day she heard the tramp of the crowd, thirsty for blood, which hurried to watch the dying sufferings of two youths tortured by the wheel and at the stake for the murder of their father. The shrieks of the criminals, the ferocity of the crowd, were stamped upon Manon's very soul. Her heart throbbed with pity no less for the cruel onlookers, watching their prey with tigerish delight, than for the sufferers themselves.

From that time the condition of the people occupied her thoughts more and more, and in violent contrast to their miserable poverty she could place the state and magnificence of their rulers. For in her twentieth year she stayed for a week with her mother in the palace of Versailles, lodging in the attics by the invitation of a friend who was one of the royal servants.

There she must often have seen the young Queen in the Palace gardens; and the sight seems to have roused much bitterness against poor Marie Antoinette, all unconscious in her innocent gaiety of the opinion of her strenuous namesake. "Take me away," says Marie Phlipon to her mother, "or I shall detest these people so heartily that I shall not know what to do with my hatred."

So she returned once more to her home, to brood over the wasteful excess of the palace and the grinding poverty of the cottage. But not for long was she left undisturbed. Her mother died with terrible suddenness, and Manon was bereft of her best friend and protector. Her father, who only cared for her as far as she ministered to his vanity and selfishness, began to neglect both home and daughter.

He was flattered and pleased by the number of distinguished and literary men whom the brilliant conversation and witty tongue of his child attracted to his house; but when he found that Manon was by no means inclined to marry the first fine gentleman who asked her, he grew restive, neglected his business affairs, and began to spend his own and his daughter's patrimony at the gaming-table.

In vain she tried to win him back by her careful housekeeping and tender affection: he grew more and more violent in temper, and once even bade her leave his house for ever if she could not find a husband for herself.

Now Manon had not come to the age of twenty-five without having had several offers of marriage; but she had a very high ideal of married life, and from this she refused to be moved by her father's scoldings and teasings on the subject. The only suitor upon whom she looked with favour was a tall, thin, cadaverous gentleman from Amiens, who had one day called with an introduction from a mutual friend, and after several visits had kept up a correspondence with her when he set out on his travels.

This was M. Roland, whose formal request for her hand was met with such a contemptuous refusal from Manon's inconsistent father that the girl was forced to come to an abrupt decision.

She saw that it was hopeless to win her father back to home and work, that it was more probable that he would attend to the latter if she were not in the house to superintend matters, and that, in the state of poverty which he was surely bringing upon them, she had better fit herself for an independent livelihood if M. Roland did not at once claim her for his own.

So, without an open quarrel, she left her father's house and went to live in an attic in the convent where she had spent her happiest year of childhood. It was all very different now. The old days of religious enthusiasm would never return again. Home troubles and intellectual difficulties had turned Manon far from the pleasant paths of former days, and all she could do now was to wait in proud patience and dismal poverty for a cautious and dilatory lover, who took six months to make up his mind after he heard she had left her father's house.

This long delay killed the spring of love in Manon, but when M. Roland at length appeared upon the scene, and seeing her looking more beautiful than ever behind the convent grating, asked her to be his wife, she decided that admiration and respect were, after all, a good foundation for marriage, and so agreed. They were a very ill-assorted pair,—he, austere and precise; she, full of

enthusiasm and emotion,—but she married him that she might add to the happiness of an honourable man, and she nobly fulfilled her resolve.

Her first few years of married life were calm enough. They lived at Amiens, where she renewed her friendship with Sophie and her sister Henriette. Here her only child, Eudora, was born in 1781, and grew to be a reserved, cold-natured little person, on whom her mother lavished a wealth of affection which was scarcely reciprocated. A visit to England only served to intensify her sense of rebellion against the slavery and misery of her own countrymen.

But most of her time was spent in a little country village among the vineyards, where her husband's ancestral home was situated, and where studies of all kinds were laid aside for the ordinary humdrum duties of wife and mother.

Gradually, however, there penetrated to this quiet spot the sound of the muttering thunder which preceded the great storm of the French Revolution. The Assembly of the States-General, the representatives of the people, which had not met for more than a hundred and fifty years, the fall of the Bastille, that emblem of tyranny, the Declaration of the Rights of Man, which declared all men to be "citizens" on equal terms without distinctions of rank—all these things were received by Madame Roland with intense enthusiasm. "Who is the traitor," she writes at this time, "who at this moment minds any business but that of the nation!"

Then came the riot at Versailles and the forced return of the royal family to the Tuileries; and in 1790 that curious outburst of national revival which showed itself like a gleam of sunshine before a storm.

The Rolands were in Lyons now, whither M. Roland had been appointed to an important position on the municipal body which was attempting to reform the condition of the people of that town.

To the delight of his wife, he had no sooner made himself thoroughly acquainted with the conditions of the silk manufacture for which Lyons was famous than he was summoned to Paris to represent to the National Assembly the necessity of aid for the city.

From that moment Madame Roland plays an important part in the drama of the Revolution. No sooner was she settled in apartments with husband and child than a large number of political notables gathered round her. Her powers of thought, her clear sight, her vigorous speech, made her a valuable partisan, while her freedom from mere party instincts, her love of the people, and her high moral tone made her the ideal of the purer Revolutionary spirit.

The attempted flight of the royal family brought matters to a climax in the June of 1791; and Madame Roland was one of the first to declare that this was the opportunity for the deposition of the King and the formation of a Republic. This had always been her ideal, and it was to her now the only means of averting bloodshed.

She was present at the meeting of the Jacobin

Club in the church of what had been a Jacobin monastery, when all the leading members, kneeling on the ground with drawn swords, swore to live free or die; and describing it afterwards she says: "At last I have seen the fire of liberty lit in my country; it cannot be quenched again. . . . I shall end my days when it pleases nature. My last breath will still be a sigh of joy and hope for the generations to succeed us."

But alas for her high hopes! The sunshine of "liberty, equality, fraternity," was soon to be quenched in blood.

The outcome of this meeting of the Jacobin Club was a monster petition for the deposition of the King, but the assembly of the people for this purpose in the Champs de Mars was the first occasion of a purposeless massacre of some hundreds of men, women, and children by the cannon of the National Guards, instigated it is supposed by the party which still upheld the Constitution—that is, who wished the King to rule, but under the Assembly.

For a time the Jacobin Club was in danger of collapse, and Robespierre, its leading spirit, was forced to hide himself.

And just then, his mission having been fulfilled, M. Roland returned to his country house with the wife whose heart remained behind in seething, passionate Paris.

Meantime the days of the National Assembly came to an end, and a new Assembly was called, conspicuous in which were a little band of ardent men from the Gironde, the "idealists of the Revolu-

tion"; full of zeal for a free Republic, but determined to achieve it by worthy means and to keep clear of violence or bloodshed. When the Rolands returned to Paris in the December of that year, it was with these high-minded men of the "Gironde" party that Madame Roland at once threw in her lot.

Early in 1792 M. Roland entered the new Ministry, and from that time his wife became the leading spirit of his party. Her wonderful insight into character and strong grasp of principles made her a most valuable helper; and had she been perfectly free to act on her own responsibility, there is little doubt that she would so have inspired the faction with that unity, determination, and clear purpose for lack of which it fell. But she was obliged to speak through the lips of her husband, and his want of tact and rigidity in dealing with details when principles were at stake, made him a most difficult person to influence.

M. Roland had by this time been appointed as Minister of the Interior, a most important post; but his wife, though now mistress of a magnificent Ministerial residence, made no difference in the simplicity of her life, keeping only a small room for her private use, and meeting her husband's colleagues twice a week at a Ministerial dinner at which she was the only woman present, though her little girl was usually at her side.

Meantime the difficulty of getting the unfortunate Louis XVI. to adopt any definite line of conduct with regard to the new Republic was pressing hard.

Madame Roland herself wrote to him on one occasion, imploring him to trust the nation, and not on any account to involve it in foreign war by calling in an invading force. The effect of this letter, sent in M. Roland's name, was to bring about the dismissal of the Ministers by the Court party in the Assembly, and thus to make the Girondists the most popular people in Paris. But the mischief was done.

The rumour of an approaching army of foreigners roused the whole of France. Two hundred Marseillais, singing the Hymn of the Revolution, marched to the aid of Paris through the length and breadth of France, calling the people to arms. The unfortunate King, Queen, and the royal children were imprisoned in the Temple, the Swiss Guard was massacred, and within a few hours the leadership passed from the hands of the Assembly to those of Danton and the "Commune."

Between this man and Madame Roland there existed a violent antipathy. "I never," she says, "beheld so repulsive and atrocious a countenance. . . . I could not reconcile that face with a well-meaning man."

Marat, too, had emerged from his lurking-place to take his seat in this unconstitutional Assembly—Marat, who revelled in bloodshed and openly sang the praises of murder. Little indeed had such men in common with the enthusiastic idealism of Marie Roland or the uprightness of her husband.

The nearness of the Austrian army, however, reconciled the people to any measures of violence;

and during the long hot August days crowds of nobles, priests, or suspected citizens were arrested. The prisons were crowded.

On the 2nd of September all Paris was full of unrest and excitement. The air was thick with sinister rumours, the bells rang muffled peals, volleys of cannon thundered in the distance—what did it all mean?

No one knew how it began or who was the instigator, but just as a party of priests was being transferred to the Abbaye, the most crowded of the prisons, the fury of the crowd by whom they were surrounded seemed to explode into a wild thirst for blood. The prison doors were opened. Prisoners were haled forth and done to death by the pikes of the multitude as they reached the outer air. For three days and nights Paris went mad, like a tiger who has tasted blood, and the streets were literally choked with the bodies of the slain. Those who stood aside from these horrors cried in vain, "Why does not the Commune stop it?" It was only too clear that the Commune, under Marat and Danton, were the instigators of the whole affair.

But the multitude was not content to stay its rage with the bodies of prisoners only. Those who were suspected of sympathy with the murdered or disapproval of these desperate measures must also be thrown to the wild beasts. On Sunday, September 2nd, when she was at home alone, a crowd of yelling men surrounded the Ministerial residence, calling upon the Minister to furnish them with arms. The trembling servants assured them that

M. Roland was not within; but as they refused to depart, Madame Roland sent for ten of them to speak to her in person.

They rushed in, ragged and wild of aspect, only to be somewhat daunted by the calm self-possession of the brave wife. When they again demanded arms, she bade them go to the Minister of War; her husband had no arms to give. They had been there already, they said, and muttered darkly, "These Ministers are traitors."

"Take your complaints to the Commune," said Madame Roland, with perfect coolness; "but if you want my husband you will find him doing his duty at a Cabinet meeting."

They departed; but Madame Roland, watching them from a balcony, saw one of their number, mad with rage, with his shirt-sleeves rolled up, brandishing a sword and cursing the Ministers as traitors.

Curiously enough, at this critical moment the Rolands owed their escape to the very man whom Marie so hated and despised. Danton discovered that an order of arrest was out against the Minister, and getting possession of it before it was executed, went to the Mayor of Paris, saying, "See here! That committee of *enragés* has made out an order of arrest against Roland. We cannot allow this! A member of the Council, too!"

The Mayor took the order, read it, and returned it, saying, "Let it be. It will produce a good effect." "Produce a good effect!" said Danton, looking hard at the Mayor. "No; I cannot allow it."

But the Rolands well understood the peril they were in.

"We are under the knife of Robespierre and Marat," she said to a friend at this time; and terror of the consequences no doubt helps to account for the way in which M. Roland at first kept quietly out of the way, making no protest against proceedings which his party considered infamous.

He was most anxious to send in his resignation, but his wife kept him firm to his post. "For my husband to quit the Administration at such a juncture would prove a public calamity," she said. "But as for my enthusiasm for the Revolution, I am ashamed of it! Scoundrels have defiled it! It is become hideous; but we cannot leave Paris."

From the opening of the Republic in September 1792 under the leadership of Danton, Marat, and Robespierre, the Girondists did not cease to protest against rule by massacre and violence. M. Roland, urged by his wife, even ventured to address a remonstrance to the Assembly, which was printed and widely published. The position of the Gironde grew more and more critical. The only way for its members to recover the power which was fast slipping from their hands was to join forces with Danton, who had already made proposals to that effect.

Strange as it may seem to those who share Madame Roland's antipathy and look upon Danton as a criminal maniac, it would have been the only course of wisdom. For Danton, brutal and violent though he might be, yet was perfectly sincere in

acting solely for what he believed was the good of the nation, without a shadow of personal greed or ambition; and had he been held in check by the lofty ideals of the Girondists, the Republic might have been saved.

But Madame Roland's pure and humane character revolted utterly against joining hands with this man; and her influence stirred the whole party against him. Compromise seemed unnecessary, too; for the Girondists had the majority in the Convention, and were strong enough to demand the persecution of the instigators of the September Massacres. This brought them face to face with Danton, Marat, and Robespierre, and a deadly conflict began. But the feelings of the mob were with the three Revolutionary leaders, and Robespierre's terribly clever speech of defence resulted in their complete victory.

The fall of the Girondists was now only a matter of weeks. Once only did there seem some chance of reconciliation, and that was when the victorious General Dumouriez returned to Paris and both parties united to welcome him.

The Rolands gave a dinner in his honour, at which Madame presided in her gayest and most brilliant mood, wearing a "Republican gown," whose white folds fell from neck to heel, and her thick dark hair knotted loosely together and flowing to her waist in the fashion of a Roman matron. It was the last ray of light before the black night of terror which was to see these gay and laughing guests and hostess scattered in secret hiding-places or waiting in lonely patience for the hour of death.

In the events that followed hard upon one another Madame Roland takes a very prominent place. It was probably rather admiration than spite that made her *bête noir* Danton exclaim, "Why not invite Madame Roland to the Ministry too? Everyone knows that Roland is not alone in office." But the envenomed eyes of Marat and his friends were upon her with no friendly gaze, and they only awaited an opportunity to strike. This soon came, through a characteristic but very imprudent act of her own. The trial of Louis XVI. was approaching, and his enemies were on the lookout for any scrap of evidence against him, when a locksmith, who had been employed by the King, brought information to the Rolands of the existence of an iron chest in the Tuileries, containing important State papers.

Immediately she heard of them, Madame Roland hurried to the Palace, emptied the contents of the chest into a napkin and brought them to her husband, who looked them through, docketed and affixed his seal to each bundle, and then handed them over to the Convention. Their object was to prevent false evidence being inserted among these papers, but it was a most unwise step as regarded themselves. For though the papers were full of matters which seriously compromised the King, the attempt at even temporary suppression was enough in those days to stamp the Rolands as traitors to the cause.

But they had still many friends on their side, and when Roland had been called to the Convention and had answered satisfactorily the charges

brought against him, he was discharged. Then Madame Roland was called, and spoke so bravely, clearly, and wisely as to her intention in the matter that she was acquitted amid thunders of applause. For the moment Marat was foiled, but he could, as he thought, afford to wait.

Meanwhile the Girondists were forced to look on helplessly while Louis XVI., whom at worst they would have banished from his country, was led out to die on the scaffold. Their murmurs of dissent and disapproval were met with threats of assassination. The leaders of the party were forced to seek refuge in the houses of friends. Madame Roland herself was persuaded to leave her official home disguised as a peasant woman, but at the last minute she threw aside her cap and cloak, exclaiming, "I am ashamed at the part you wish me to play; I will neither disguise myself nor go hence. If they want to assassinate me, let it be at my own house."

On the day after the execution of the King, Roland had resigned his post as Minister, and his resignation was received in ominous silence. His wife's anxieties were increased by his failing health and by the difficulty of providing for the safety of her child Eudora, now a solemn, fair-haired girl of thirteen. It was dangerous to keep her in Paris, where at any moment they might be arrested, but still more dangerous to send her away from her only protectors to unreliable strangers.

While she, full of uneasiness, was still in retirement in the Rue de la Harpe, the battle between

the Girondists and the party of Marat was raging in the Convention, and bade fair to set all France in a blaze of civil war.

Marat for a time had lost ground; but a leader of the Girondists seeing that only human sacrifice would heal the widening breach between Paris and the provinces, who held by the Gironde, had nobly cried, "Citizens, do not hesitate between a few men and the Commonwealth. Fling us into the abyss, and let the country be saved!" Deaf to the nobility of the offer, the Revolutionary Tribunal triumphantly recalled Marat to power, who, looking towards that part of the Hall where sat the doomed band of the Girondists, was heard to mutter, "I have them now. They too shall have a triumphant progress, but it shall be to the guillotine."

On the 31st of May, after a week's illness, Madame Roland was awakened from a troubled sleep at half-past five in the evening by a loud knocking at the door. It was a company of armed men, sent by the Revolutionary Committee to arrest Citizen Roland. The old man, weak and shaken with ill-health, refused to go with them, saying that he did not recognise the authority of the Committee, and they forthwith returned to the council-chamber of the Commune.

This action roused all the latent fire in Madame Roland. Without consulting anyone, she threw on a shawl and drove to the Assembly, determined to speak her mind and to rouse the Convention to a sense of what was right. For an hour she awaited a chance of entry, while inside a battle

was raging over the proposed arrest of all the Girondin chiefs. Robespierre was urging their destruction; the rope was already round their necks. At length a friend hurried out to bid her not to wait: there was no chance of a hearing —no hope in any direction.

He persuaded her to return home. Torn with anxiety, she did so, and finding her husband had left the house, returned to the Hall, only to find it deserted. With some difficulty she regained her house, for her carriage was repeatedly stopped on the way. As she was going upstairs a man ran after her with an inquiry for Citizen Roland. She said with truth that she knew nothing of his whereabouts, and escaping to her room, embraced her sleeping child, and sat down to write a note to her husband.

Once again came that terrible knocking and the tramp of feet. A band of men from the Conmune entered roughly and bade her give them Roland's address. She again declared her ignorance, whereupon they left the room. But the sentinel before the door and the guard before the house were significant facts, and she was not surprised when on descending the stairs after a brief sleep, she was at once arrested.

In the pale light of dawn she said good-bye to the weeping servants, and embraced over and over again the terrified Eudora. The streets were full of market-women, who shook their fists at her, crying, "To the guillotine! To the guillotine!"

And then Madame Roland passed to the prison

of the Abbaye. There she spent three weeks with wonderful philosophy and calm. Her friends gathered round her, bringing her news of the flight and safe arrival of her husband to the house of people she could trust. Others had taken charge of little Eudora. There was every hope that she would be triumphantly acquitted as before. But her persecutors were men of refined cruelty.

Three weeks after her imprisonment, without a formal trial, she was told that she was free. Joyfully she drove off to her apartments, intending to make her way at once to her child, when two men who had followed her from the prison stopped her on the stairs, saying, "Citoyenne Roland, we arrest you in the name of the law."

It was a cruel blow. Not only had she to struggle against overwhelming disappointment, but she was now imprisoned in Sainte Pelagie, one of the lowest and most sordid of the prisons, in a cell whose thin walls forced her to hear the horrid converse of women of the lowest class, thieves and murderers, on either side. Yet she kept a brave heart, steadily refusing to attempt an escape, which might have been managed by the kindness of her gaoler, for fear of inciting her enemies to greater zeal in the pursuit of her husband.

It was while she lay in prison that Marat was killed by the hand of Charlotte Corday, who hoped in her brave simplicity that the death of this cruel tyrant would set her unhappy country free.

But this only hastened the end of the twenty-one Girondist chiefs who were in captivity. The death-

sentence was pronounced on them, and they were led to the scaffold, singing the Song of Liberty with their last breath. As yet no mention had been made of Madame Roland. The shadows were deepening round her, however. On the day her friends were executed she was taken to the Conciergerie, from which Marie Antoinette had passed a fortnight previously to the scaffold. Here too she found herself in the company of reprobates, but rousing herself from her depression, she set herself to help, console, and reform them. The worst of the women prisoners became her ardent followers, clung to her skirts, and fought together for the privilege of waiting on her.

One consolation she must have found in the faithful love of two of her oldest friends. First came poor weeping Agatha, the little nun of the Convent of the Congregation, now turned out to fend for herself in an unknown world, who conquered her fears and crept to the prison day by day to lament over her *mignonne.*

Then there was Henriette, sister of the once beloved Sophie, who had for many years held the first place in Manon's heart. She was a Royalist, but all differences of political opinion were forgotten now. She was a widow and childless, and she now came to Manon's cell to implore her to change places with her, and so escape to join her husband and daughter.

"But they would kill you, my good Henriette!" Madame Roland reminded her. "Your blood would be on my head! Better suffer a thousand deaths

than have to reproach myself with yours!" In vain did this faithful friend implore her just to change clothes and see what would happen. Manon stood firm, and they parted, never to meet again on this earth.

At length the prisoner was summoned before her judges. At this unjust tribunal Madame Roland was her old brave self, clear-headed, straightforward in her answers, facing with the utmost courage the foul accusations that were worse than death. The judges were so hard put to it to find reason for condemning her that they closed the trial which was but a parody of justice, and declared her guilty of death.

She received her sentence with the utmost calmness, saying, "You consider me worthy to share the fate of the great men whom you have assassinated. I shall try to carry to the scaffold the courage they have shown."

There was sore lamentation that night in the Conciergerie when the prisoners heard they were about to lose their friend. But she cheered them bravely, saying, "Nay, friends, am I not going to die for my country and liberty? Is it not what we have always wished?"

So the old girlish feeling of love and yearning for the people burnt up strong again in those last hours, and she looked with gentle eyes on the sullen crowd through which the death-cart passed in the dusk of the November day. She had loved the people all her life, and now she was ready to die for them. On that last dread journey she forgot herself in

trying to cheer the cowering old forger who shared the death-cart with her. By the etiquette of the scaffold, she should die first; but she resigned the privilege to spare him the horror of seeing her end. Mounting the scaffold with cheerful step, she bowed her head to the statue of Liberty which stood near, saying in a firm voice, "O Liberty! what crimes are committed in thy name!" So died the heroine of the Revolution, the representative of all that was fine and pure and good in that great movement towards liberty and the rights of Man. Her husband did not long survive her. Escape was hopeless, and unable to face a similar fate, he died by his own hand.

But still the name of his noble wife is spoken with awe and gratitude in the country which owes so much to her generous devotion, her single-hearted love, her untiring patriotism.

HANNAH MORE

From an engraving by A. Halbert after the picture by Opie in 1786

HANNAH MORE

"Delightful task! to rear the tender thought."—THOMSON
"Her air, her manner, all who saw admired."—CRABBE

TO understand the real value of the life of Hannah More we must put ourselves back into the days when such things as public schools for the children of the poor were unheard of, and when ignorance of the densest kind was supposed to be the only suitable condition for the working man and woman. To teach them merely to read and write was to run a grave danger of "putting them in a wrong position." Anything more advanced in the way of education was considered not only waste of time but wicked presumption on the part of those who attempted it.

The education of the daughters of wealthier parents was in a condition not much further advanced. Nothing existed in the least like our modern schools; the High School girl was an unknown product. Yet here and there we find an eager mind that was not to be fettered by rules of polite ignorance, but sought more keenly after the tree of knowledge by reason of the many lions on the way which must be overcome.

Such a one was Hannah More, the youngest but

one of the five daughters of a country grammar-school master, living near Stapleton, in Gloucestershire. All these little maids were naturally bright and ready to learn, and this was encouraged to a certain extent; for their parents were not at all well off, and it was solemnly impressed upon them that their duty was to qualify themselves as soon as possible for the work of teachers, that they might keep a boarding-school together.

But the subjects which girls might be taught in those days were extremely limited, and when bright little Hannah, who had crept in to listen to lessons given to the grammar-school boys, was found to have some idea of the rudiments of Latin and mathematics, she was sharply recalled to the consideration of studies "more suitable to a young lady."

Nor were these to be obtained under very easy conditions. Mary, the eldest, was sent to a school in Bristol, kept by some French ladies. Here she was instructed in French, the use of the globes, needlework, arithmetic taught without any understanding of its principles, and such high-sounding things as "orthography and caligraphy," under which we recognise the more familiar "spelling and writing."

But the most remarkable part of such an education is the part taken in it by the four little sisters at home.

Every Saturday evening the good, hard-working Mary returned home, her mind overflowing with scraps of knowledge, all of which were faithfully

imparted forthwith to Elizabeth, Sarah, Hannah, and Martha, generally known as "Patty."

Nor was such a means of learning as futile as one might have thought, for we hear that about this time Mr. More, who had invited some French officers to dine, found himself embarrassed by not being able to understand a word of their language.

Then Hannah shyly volunteered to be interpreter, and to her parents' intense though carefully concealed pride, was heartily complimented by the foreigners on the way in which she maintained the conversation. She was then about ten years of age, and before another two years had passed away her elder sisters' education was supposed to be complete, and she and Patty, the youngest, were sent off with them to Bristol to open the school.

It must have been a serious adventure in those days of fragile and dependent young women. "We went to seek our fortunes," wrote Sally, the second girl, in later days, "with a bottle of water, a bed, and a blanket. We found a great house with nothing in it, and empty it was likely to remain, till looking into our knowledge-boxes, we happened to find a little *larning*—a good thing when land is gone, or rather none; and so at last, by giving a little of this *larning* to those who had less, we got a good store of gold in return."

The school was clearly a great success, for it soon had quite a famous reputation in Bristol; and the young head-mistress with her three girlish assistants became well-known figures in the society of the place. Hannah's part in its organisation

must have been that of pupil to begin with. She was never very strong, and the unselfish elder sisters seem to have guarded her carefully from beginning to teach too early, and to have arranged for her a freer and more varied education than fell to the lot of most girls of her age. She was allowed to learn Latin, as well as Spanish and Italian, which she soon mastered sufficiently well to be able to enjoy the poetry of each language.

Better still, perhaps, instead of having each moment of the day mapped out for her, she was given plenty of free time, with permission to fill it as she liked. She had always possessed the "mania for scribbling," as the Latin poets call it, and a lively imagination now produced an endless series of poems and essays, none of which seem to have been worthy of much attention, till we come to a little pastoral play, called the *Search after Happiness*, written for her sisters' pupils—very tedious to the minds of modern girls, but considered in those days a most happy and witty production.

One gift Hannah possessed, to which the girl of to-day scarcely dreams of attaining. She could not only read and enjoy books of all kinds, as well as take a deep interest in the politics and other topics of the day, but she could discuss them afterwards in a sensible and interesting fashion. In our age the art of conversation is well-nigh lost. It is the rarest thing in the world to find a girl, well educated at school or college though she may be, able to talk at any length, with reflection and without egotism, on any subject of importance.

But we hear that Hannah at the age of sixteen, when laid low by a dangerous illness, was able so to talk and interest the doctor who was visiting her, that not until he had said good-bye and was half-way down the stairs did he recall to himself the reason he had come; and with much amusement Mary heard him exclaim, "Bless me, I forgot to ask the girl how she was!"

This illness left her a slight and delicate maiden, with the bright eyes and eager look that generally accompany a sensitive and nervous temperament. From this time, too, she was subject to the terrible headaches which were a recurring trouble for the rest of her life, though in their intervals, like many delicate girls, she was unusually full of life and vigour.

When Hannah was twenty-two, she came into possession, through the generosity of a friend, of a private income, and so at once gave up her share in the school. And now she was able to carry out a girlish dream foreshadowed when she was a tiny child and was found riding on a gate.

"Where are you going?" asked her mother.

"I am riding to London to see bishops and booksellers!" replied the child; and now she could actually carry out her design. The charms of "bishops" were no longer so strong, and paled before those of "booksellers," and still more, of the literary circles which gathered round the latter. It was the London of Doctor Johnson, whose strong personality and resolute opinions carried all before him in the world of letters. Judge, then, the delight

of the provincial Miss More, who had been considered a wit in Bristol, but whose warm admiration for the great man and his friends might well have made her but a distant worshipper at their shrines, to find that her reputation had preceded her. Miss Reynolds, sister of the great Sir Joshua, was known slightly to her, and this kindly lady soon made her acquainted with all the celebrities, who received Hannah with the utmost warmth.

Diffidence was out of fashion, and the girl's way of openly expressing her admiration for the "lions" made those great and terrible beasts roar very softly to the tune of the compliments paid by her.

Once, indeed, she overdid it in the case of Doctor Johnson himself, who told her crossly that she should consider what her praise was worth before she forced it on him; but he must have soon forgiven her, for her sister Sarah, who was often her companion, records many delightful conversations in which the great man called her "child," and more than once gave his emphatic approval, "You are right, madam," to her opinion. David Garrick, the great actor, and his charming wife, were also her great friends. With them she usually stayed when in town, and he it was who gave her the nickname of "Nine," because she was supposed to combine in herself the talents of the Nine Muses.

Hannah was soon admitted to the circle of "blue-stockings"—the learned ladies who circled round Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and quickly became one of the best-known members of London society.

She stood boldly apart, however, from its follies and negligences; for she jeers openly at the fashion which made ladies wear on their heads "an acre and a half of shrubbery between them; besides slopes, grass-plats, tulip-beds, clumps of peonies, kitchen-gardens, and green-houses." She was shocked at the ignorance of the same class, members of which, when crowding to see Reynolds' picture of the kneeling child Samuel, asked openly who Samuel was; and she boldly refused to take part in the entertainments in which most of Sunday was spent by the frivolous party of fashion.

There were times, too, when Hannah was not sorry to return to the quiet home of her elder sisters, and it was there that she began her literary career with a ballad and two dramas, all of which were most successful at the time. They are rightly forgotten now: their instant success was due to their hitting the popular taste, and they lacked that touch of universal thought and portrayal which would have kept them fresh in later years.

The death of Garrick and a long stay with his grief-stricken widow turned Hannah's mind to graver themes. She was growing older, too, and her mind was gradually seeking the strongly religious paths on which she was to find her future life-work. She wrote at this time, for the instruction of ignorant and godless London society, a little collection of sacred plays based on actual Biblical events. A few years later, the death of her greatest hero, Doctor Johnson, detached her from this society for ever.

She had knelt by his side at his last public Communion in St. Clement's Church, and had treasured all the kindly last words of a truly religious and great-hearted man. But she understood him so little that when she read the proofs of Boswell's biography, she implored him to soften some of the rough speeches and snarling retorts recorded there. Whereupon "Bozzy" very wisely replied to her entreaties that he would not cut off his hero's claws nor make a tiger a cat to please anybody.

Soon after Doctor Johnson's death, Hannah More retired almost altogether from London life, and spent much of her time in a pleasant country village near Bristol, known as Cowslip Green. Here she wrote anonymously a little book, attacking boldly the "Manners of the Great," which, in spite of its open denunciation of the very people amongst whom she had so lately moved, was received with such favour that this epigram, by an anonymous writer, was sent to her:—

> "Of sense and religion in this little book
> All agree there's a wonderful store;
> But while round the world for an author they look,
> I only am wishing for '*More*.'"

In spite of all this energy, and in spite also of the fact that she had reached her forty-fourth year, Hannah was only about to begin the great work of her life.

In the year 1789 she joined her sisters, who had now retired from school-work, in a permanent

home at Cowslip Green. There they were visited by Wilberforce, who was in those days almost as much interested in the condition of the English poor as in the Slavery question. In this charming spot, indeed, about ten miles from the famous scenery of Cheddar, he found a state of heathendom and miserable ignorance which can scarcely be believed. There were no resident clergy; a curate served four parishes by riding post-haste from one to the other on a Sunday, giving barely time for a gabbled service between, and the fact of his drinking at the ale-house with the farmers effectually hindered any feeling of reverence for his ministrations. The farmers were of a rude, ignorant type, and strongly averse from anything that would tend to raise the humble position of the peasant. They frankly told the Miss Mores that the country had never prospered since religion had been "brought in" by the monks of Glastonbury; judging from this, the condition of their servants, the cottagers, may be imagined. They were scarcely better than savages in their behaviour, or than heathen in their religious ideas.

So Wilberforce promised to find the money if some of the ladies of the place would find the work. Most of them shrank from contact with the rough farmers, whose opposition to any plans of reform must first be overcome.

But Hannah and Patty, her favourite younger sister, stood boldly in the breach. "I tamed and stroked the insolence of these petty tyrants," writes the former to Mr. Wilberforce. "I fondled

their ugly children, caressed their spaniels, commended their cider, and even swallowed their wine."

These wily methods were crowned with success. The aim of the sisters was to civilise the people gradually by educating the children; and by persuading the farmers that this plan would not only secure their orchards from being robbed and their chickens stolen, but would also lower the poor rates, they gained the hearty assent of the masters to the scheme.

In the largest of the group of villages a disused vicarage was opened as a school, and by various bribes and threats the youth of the surrounding district was gathered in.

They were not promising pupils. "Several of the big boys," she says, "had been tried at the last assizes. Three were the children of a person under sentence of death; many were thieves; all ignorant, profane, and vicious."

Other schools were started in the district, and with great difficulty mistresses were found for them. These were generally elderly women, too old for any other kind of work, and certainly not the best of teachers; but it was not necessary to appoint a very learned person when only reading, knitting, and sewing were taught, with the Bible and Catechism on Sundays. Miss Hannah and Miss Patty kept a sharp eye upon teachers and pupils, visiting one or the other of the schools with the greatest regularity.

Next year the ignorance of a wider region was

grappled with. It was no easy task. The villagers of the Mendip country objected to allow their children to go to school, on the score that after seven years of such instruction the ladies would be entitled to sell their pupils as slaves beyond the seas! One village was peopled by such savages that no policeman dared to show his face there. When with much difficulty about a hundred children were gathered together in a schoolroom, not one of them could answer the question "Who made you?"

The most encouraging part of the work, however, was the enormous difference made in the lives of these poor people by the influence of the teaching brought to bear on them. Sunday after Sunday one or other of the centres was visited by the ladies, and very soon they got to know the boys and girls quite intimately.

Peace and order began to reign in a region where at one time every man's hand was against his fellow. Far and wide the reform brought about by these two energetic women became known, and Hannah was urged by outsiders to write some short tales, with a clear moral attached, in order that the influence of such a clear-sighted, healthy personality might be spread abroad. Nowadays these stories are scoffed at sometimes as "pious tracts," but in those times, when books were almost unknown luxuries to the poor, and even to the children of the rich, they were welcomed most heartily.

But one seldom finds a woman so perfectly

outspoken and determined in her actions as Hannah More allowed to continue her work of reform without opposition.

Partly from jealousy of her undoubtedly supreme position in the parishes whose children she had educated, partly from misunderstandings of one kind or another, a fierce storm of accusation and abuse broke upon her. Some accused her of setting up schools in which thieving and lying were openly taught; others of praying for the success of the French, then our mortal foes.

In spite of all this, the two ladies bravely continued their work, though they were obliged to leave Cowslip Green and settle elsewhere in the district. A long illness was the result of worry and over-work, and after she recovered, it was only to see one after another of her sisters called away. Her beloved Patty was the last to go, and for a time it seemed as though the one surviving sister would soon follow her. But Hannah recovered, and took up the burden of life again with her usual cheerful spirit. For thirteen years she lived on, full of work, writing, planning, and above all receiving countless visitors who came to her in her old age for help and advice on every kind of subject.

No doubt she became somewhat of a female pope in those days; but one can easily forgive her when one remembers her long life of strenuous endeavour for the improvement of her fellow-men, the generations she had seen brought up according to her ideas, and the immense advance in education,

FANNY BURNEY (MADAME D'ARBLAY)
From a portrait by Edward Burney

both moral and intellectual, of which she had been the mainspring. Not that she approved by any means of this march of intellect. She forgot that we can more easily send a boulder rolling down a slope than stop it in mid-career, and was greatly shocked when on questioning a small country maid as to what she was learning at school, she was told, "Please'm, I learns geography and the harts and senses!"

She died very quietly in the year 1833, with the name of her best-loved sister on her lips, leaving behind her a grateful memory in the minds of thousands of men and women who would have passed their days in ignorance, not only of the elements of education, but of the simplest truths of the Christian faith, had it not been for her wise thought and care for them.

FANNY BURNEY
(MADAME D'ARBLAY)

"The harvest of a quiet eye."
WORDSWORTH, *The Poet's Epitaph*

THE number of excellent stories written by women in these latter days make it very difficult for us to realise the interest and importance attached to the quiet little lady who, in the year 1778, became known to the world as the author of *Evelina*.

Yet even now the book makes its writer almost unique, for it possesses a characteristic that is still very rarely found in the novels of women—that of humour and satire. The experiences of the young heroine, well connected on one side, who goes to visit her mother's ill-bred relatives, are described with a caustic touch and an unerring fidelity which make the vulgar cousins with their common talk and amusing ignorance as alive to-day as they were then, although their outward manners are exclusively those of the eighteenth century. But we must leave *Evelina* to tell her own story, and hasten on to that of her creator.

Fanny Burney was born in 1752 at Lynn, in Norfolk; but her father, Dr. Burney, soon migrated to London in order to obtain music pupils, and it was in the tall narrow house in Poland Street that Fanny passed most of the first half of her long life of eighty-seven years. She must have always had a quick eye for the peculiarities of others, for before she was ten she would come back from the plays, for which her father's friendship with Garrick the actor gave frequent opportunity, and "take off" the actors, composing the most absurd speeches for them, to the great amusement of her elders. It was not often, however, that little Fanny could be induced to parade her talent for mimicry.

Usually she was the most retiring and staid of maidens, with a grave little brown face, and a gift for silence that made her appear so dull and unresponsive that her sisters called her "the little dunce." It is true that at eight years old Fanny could not read; but that is hardly wonderful, since she had no teaching whatever beyond being allowed to listen while her mother read aloud Pope's *Virgil* to her elder sister. Some kindly visitor seems to have been officious enough to point out the backwardness of the child, and Mrs. Burney's "Oh, I have no fear about Fanny," must have rung pleasantly in the burning ears of her small daughter.

But this keen-eyed mother died when Fanny was eleven years old, and then all hope of regular teaching vanished. Her two elder sisters were

sent to school in France; but Dr. Burney, busy and careless man, took no heed whatever of the little brown mouse who crept so often into his library, or sat in a far-off corner during his frequent tea or supper parties, watching his guests.

To listen to many of these last was an education in itself. Garrick, the actor, had been for years a well-known and adored visitor to the nursery of the Burney children, and her father's musical reputation brought to his house all the notable musicians and artists of the day. Even the great Doctor Johnson, the "Dictator" of literary London, would come occasionally and hold forth over the teacups in the Burney drawing-room. The Doctor's house, indeed, became a kind of centre of all kinds of remarkable people of every rank, and these, quite unknown to themselves, provided an open book of human nature in all its peculiarities, which the shy child in her secluded corner was not slow to read.

By this time one of her sisters had shown her how to write, and from that period Fanny was completely happy in a world of her own invention. What was the result of this we have no means of knowing; for when she was about sixteen, her father married again. Her stepmother, though a wise and sensible woman, fully shared in the prejudices of her time against "girlish scribbling."

In those days, indeed, it was only just beginning to be anything but improper for a woman to write

novels; and Mrs. Burney's unmistakable hints made the path of duty clear to poor Fanny. She determined to burn all she had written. Her sister Susannah, her only confidante, wept at the thought of the sacrifice; but Fanny was adamant. She allowed herself, however, one safety-valve. Like most girls of her age and temperament, she kept a Journal, "in which I must confess my *every* thought, must open my whole heart." And this served as a kind of apprenticeship to her future work.

Her mornings were now spent in diligent needlework; but the busiest needle does not prevent thought. One of the martyred manuscripts had been a "History of Caroline Evelyn," the tale of a beautiful girl of the lower middle class who had married a nobleman. She had been given a daughter, whom she called "Evelina." And now Fanny's active mind began to sketch out the future career of this young lady. The "elegant" tastes of Miss Evelina must inevitably lead to absurd effects and ridiculous positions when she was obliged to mix with her relations on one side of the family. With what a vivid pen she might paint the story of "a young lady's entrance into the world" if she only had the opportunity!

At length the longing grew too strong to be withstood. We do not know exactly when the manuscript was actually begun. Probably the tale took shape almost completely in the girl's mind before she determined that the days of "propriety"

and hem-stitching should not last for ever. At any rate, it was not until she was twenty-six that the story was given to the world.

It was kept, whilst in the writing, a profound secret from all save her sisters and younger brother. But when the first two volumes were finished she began to feel, as she tells us, "an odd inclination to see it in print." So she copied it out in a feigned handwriting, in order that her identity might be completely hidden, and aiming, like most young authors, at the highest mark, she offered the manuscript to Dodsley, the famous publisher of that day. But Dodsley would have nothing to say to an anonymous author; and so the girl made her next proposal to Lowndes, a bookseller in the City. Every precaution was taken to preserve her incognito. She wrote under the name of "Grafton," and had her letters addressed to a coffee-house.

It was from thence that her young brother brought the reply. The bookseller liked the story, and was inclined to purchase it, but only on condition that the third volume was completed and submitted to him at once. This set Fanny to work in the highest spirits, damped only by one consideration: there was no reasonable doubt that this first child of her brain would shortly appear in print, the truth as to the identity of its author would then come out—and so her father must be told. The amount of courage that this needed shows distinct lack of sympathy between parent and child. But we must again remind ourselves

that it was, with very few exceptions, before the days of famous women of letters—or rather of famous novelists who were also respectable and upright women.

At last the plunge was taken. With trembling voice she asked her father's leave to "print a book"; and Dr. Burney, who had never for one instant realised his clever daughter, stared, laughed, kissed her, bade her do as she liked, and finally bustled away without even asking what the book was about. The way was now clear.

Without more family consultations, Fanny professed herself pleased to take whatever terms her publisher chose to mention, and was overcome with joy and gratitude when he sent her twenty pounds! It has been often pointed out that this negligence on Dr. Burney's part cost his daughter from twelve to fifteen hundred pounds. But we have good authority for knowing that a man, and much less a woman, is never a prophet in his father's house. Nor can we blame the bookseller for the small sum paid to Miss Burney when we remember that he was probably quite unaware of the genius that lay between those pages, and which only popular opinion could establish.

One January morning in the year 1778, Mrs. Burney, as she sat at the breakfast-table, read aloud the announcement of a new book, *Evelina; or, A Young Lady's Entrance into the World*, while the author sat sick and trembling at this first intimation of the launching of her brain-child. With a morbid

terror of publicity which yet longed for public recognition of its merits, she would not go out of doors for days for fear she should hear of some adverse or insulting opinion. But at first nothing seemed to be said about it at all.

Then of a sudden the literary and reading world woke up.

The clerks of the circulating libraries reported that everyone was asking for a book called *Evelina*, and everyone else was inquiring the name of the author. All kinds of famous men were suggested —no one seems to have dreamt that it could have been written by a woman. The author's own family were full of pride and excitement. Dr. Burney wept over its pages with joy; a friend of his told Mrs. Thrale, the leader of the literary "coteries" of the day, and she gave the book to Doctor Johnson. The great man was most unwilling to read it, but it completely won his heart. "Why, madam, what a charming book you lent me!" he remarked; and these words, reported in haste at Poland Street, sent the usually staid Fanny into such raptures of joy that she had to relieve her feelings by dancing round the mulberry bush in the garden.

Evelina at once opened the gates of fashionable and literary society to the Doctor's daughter, and she quickly became the darling of the exclusive circle at Streatham over which Mrs. Thrale and Doctor Johnson were the ruling deities. She had no personal beauty to recommend her. She was short and brown, with a large humorous mouth and

"expressive eyebrows." But her wit, her quiet power of gentle sarcasm, and her quick intuitions soon made her a general favourite. Johnson loved and treated her as a child, and would scarcely let her leave his side when she visited the Thrales. She was his "sweet, dear little Burney," and he even tried, much against her will, to teach her Latin—his highest mark of female approbation. Burke, Gibbon, Reynolds, and other great men sang her praises without stint.

No wonder she set to work again with a light heart, in order to give *Cecilia*, her second novel, to the delighted world.

But her life was not to be one unbroken record of joy and happiness, though success, as far as her stories are concerned, never failed her. Her first friends began to pass away. Johnson, mindful of his "dear little Evelina Burney" to the last, was dead. Mrs. Thrale had passed into a circle whither Fanny could not follow her. She formed an acquaintance with a new friend, a Mrs. Delany, who enjoyed a royal pension and lived in a house at Windsor belonging to the Crown; and this led to serious consequences.

"In December 1785," says her Diary, "I was on a visit to Mrs. Delany at Windsor. The dinner was over. The old lady was taking a nap. Her grandniece, a little girl of seven, was playing at some Christmas game with the visitors, when the door opened, and a stout gentleman entered unannounced, with a star on his breast, and 'What? What? What?' in his

mouth. A cry of 'The King!' was set up. A general scampering followed." Miss Burney owns that she could not have been more terrified if she had seen a ghost. But Mrs. Delany went forth to pay her duty to her royal friend, and the disturbance was quieted. Fanny was then presented, and underwent a long examination and cross-examination about all that she had written and all that she meant to write.

Then the Queen appeared upon the scene, and an "intellectual conversation" seems to have followed between the three, during which we can imagine our Fanny's difficulty in answering when His Majesty exclaimed, "Was there ever such stuff as great part of Shakespeare? Only one must not say so. But what think you? What? Is there not sad stuff? What? What?"

The result of this and similar meetings was that when the office of Keeper of the Robe fell vacant a little later, the Queen at once offered the post to Miss Burney at the salary of two hundred pounds a year. The income was dearly bought at the price of liberty, leisure for writing, intellectual companions, and the position which her books had now gained for her in the literary world.

Five of the best years of her life were spent in this dreary form of aristocratic drudgery. Her Diary gives a picture of all those long days in the history of one. She had to be up and dressed before half-past seven, in order that she might attend punctually to dress her royal mistress. Breakfast

was at eight, and the remainder of the morning was spent in rearranging chests of drawers and folding and refolding fine gowns. After this the Queen must be powdered and dressed for the day. Twice a week her hair was curled and crimped, so that altogether Fanny was seldom free till three o'clock, and was then too weary to do aught but write up her Diary.

From five o'clock till nine she was obliged to be the companion of her German colleague, Madame Schwellenberg, a most unattractive old woman, who used her few words of English to express the scorn and contempt she had for one who had so demeaned herself as to write a book. So, in self-protection, though she hated the sight of a card, poor Fanny sat at the card-table, and as Macaulay well puts it, "consented with patient sadness to give hours which might have called forth the laughter and the tears of many generations, to the king of clubs and the knave of spades."

Then once more, between eleven and twelve, the bell summoned her to the Queen's bedroom, this time for the purpose of undressing Her Majesty. And then, worn out, she might go to bed.

The monotony was not the worst part of it. The strain of standing for hours, often without food, told heavily upon her. She describes how on the occasion of the royal visit to Oxford she had been on her feet all day in attendance on her mistress, and being left alone for a moment in a "parlour"

at Magdalene College, she sank down upon a chair. One of the equerries, seeing she was well-nigh fainting with hunger and fatigue, good-naturedly shared with her some apricots and bread which he had wisely put into his pockets. Just as she had thankfully taken the food, the door opened and the Queen appeared. They sprang to their aching feet; the food was hurriedly concealed. "I found," says she, "that our appetites were to be supposed annihilated, at the same moment that our strength was to be invincible."

Only one really exciting incident occurred to make the long years less dreary. The Queen was much interested in the trial of Warren Hastings at the bar of the House of Peers, and she sent Miss Burney to Westminster Hall to watch the proceedings. Fanny at once became a warm partisan of the defendant, and would scarcely acknowledge Burke's "marked civility" because he was of those who attacked him. But such interludes were few and far between, and at length her health could no longer endure the strain. It was with the utmost difficulty that she made her escape from the Palace. The Queen, though she could not help observing the failing strength, the shortened breath and feverish touch, preferred to let her go on until, as she bitterly says, "her attendant fell dead at her feet."

Her father, too, preferred his connection with Royalty to his daughter's health, even in spite of a pathetic appeal in which she told him plainly that "she was miserable, worn with attendance and

want of sleep, that she had no comfort in life, nothing to love, nothing to hope, that her family and friends were to her as though they were not, and were remembered by her as men remember the dead. From daybreak to midnight the same killing labour, the same recreations, more hateful than labour itself, followed each other without variety, without any interval of liberty and repose." Yet he persuaded her to continue, and for another six months the misery had to be endured.

At length her wretched state of health began to be noised in the society she had been forced unwillingly to desert.

Good fussy Boswell made his way into the Palace itself, in order to persuade her to give up. "Why, dear ma'am, why do you stay? It won't do, ma'am; you must resign. We can put up with it no longer. Some very violent measures, I assure you, will be taken. We shall address Dr. Burney in a body."

Horace Walpole and other men of note took up the same cry. The doctors joined in with an assurance of speedy death unless she were removed. Her father's reluctance is almost incredible, but once overcome, he grew frightened, and pressed the matter on.

But the Queen, though outwardly calm and gentle, was not willing to let the prisoned bird fly from its gilded cage. One excuse after another was given to delay her departure, and when at length she left the Palace she had scarcely

strength to reach her home. The return to a more rational way of living soon restored her shattered nerves and broken health, however; and with all her old eagerness she threw herself into the interests of her acquaintances and friends. She went on frequent visits, and it was while staying in Surrey on one occasion that she found herself in the midst of a colony of aristocratic French refugees.

They were all very delightful people, and one of them, the frank, soldierly General D'Arblay, found the little literary lady who sympathised so warmly with the wrongs of his royal master, Louis XVI., especially charming. He gave her French lessons; and she, after describing the attractions and "extraordinary intellect" of Madame de Staël, the leader of the little colony, adds, "M. D'Arblay is one of the most delightful characters I have ever met, for openness, probity, intellectual knowledge, and unhackneyed manners."

M. D'Arblay had, of course, lost all his property; and Miss Burney possessed only the magnificent royal pension of £100 a year; but, undeterred by these hard facts, they were married in 1793, and entered upon the happiest period of Fanny's life.

Want of money led to her taking up her pen once more. Her third novel, *Camilla*, though not such a popular success as the two first, brought her in a large sum. A child was born to her in 1795, and then Madame D'Arblay, on visiting France with husband and son during the

peace of 1801, found herself suddenly cut off for ten years from her own land by the outbreak of the second Napoleonic war. At the end of that time she was about to sail for Newfoundland with her son, in order to save the latter, a lad of seventeen, from conscription; when to her delight their vessel was taken by the English, and she found herself once more upon her native shore. Her last and least notable work, *The Wanderer*, was completed in this interval; and after that she wrote no more for the public.

Her long life lasted until 1840, during which time she outlived both husband and son, so that her last days were spent in comparative loneliness, in the midst of a period which scarcely remembered or had never known the brilliant wit and caustic humour of *Evelina*.

Yet now and again she was sought out by those whose names were greater than her own had ever been. Sir Walter Scott records with evident pleasure an introduction to "Madame D'Arblay, the celebrated authoress of *Evelina* and *Cecilia*,—an elderly lady with no remains of personal beauty, but with a simple and gentle manner, pleasing expression of countenance, and apparently quick feelings. She told me she had wished to see two persons—myself, of course, being one; the other, George Canning. This was really a compliment to be pleased with."

But for the majority of the world of readers and writers Madame D'Arblay died many years before her actual end. New fashions, other codes of

manners, had pushed *Evelina* into obscurity; and it has been left for these days to drag her forth again into the light of day, with all her bravery of wit and humour and delightful portraits of eighteenth-century life.

ELIZABETH FRY

"Taught by that Power that pities me,
I learn to pity them."

GOLDSMITH, *The Hermit*

"Virtue is bold, and goodness never fearful."

SHAKESPEARE, *Measure for Measure*

FEW institutions during the first half of the nineteenth century were in such need of radical reform as the arrangements for women convicts in prison. The philanthropist John Howard had done much to improve the condition of the men in like circumstances, but about the year 1813, when Mrs. Fry first visited Newgate, the state of things in the women's wards of the prison was about as bad as it could be.

To begin with, there was no difference whatever made in the lot of the tried and the untried; hence many innocent girls and women were obliged to associate, until the fact of their innocence was established, with women criminals of the most abandoned class.

Crowded together into four small rooms, with nothing to do all day, without any superintendence save that of a gaoler and his son, they naturally became within a short time more like animals than

human beings. For the large proportion of them gloried in every kind of wickedness, and had lost all shreds of self-respect. This is no wonder, indeed; for they were given no clothes, although their rags scarcely covered them; they had no beds, but slept herded together on the floor like sheep in a pen. There was only the most scanty provision made for cooking and washing; and most terrible of all, they were allowed, and indeed encouraged, by the gaolers to spend the money they obtained through begging from the strangers who came out of curiosity to visit them, on strong liquor, which was sold by their superintendents in the prison itself.

Wild with drink, steeped in vice, and often half mad with misery and bodily sickness, the wretched women spent the day and much of the night in fighting, swearing, and shrieking, so that their ward became notorious for its horrors, and the governor of Newgate himself was afraid to venture among them.

What was more terrible yet was the fact that a large proportion of the occupants of that dreadful abode was made up of children of all ages, who were allowed to be with their mothers, and who grew up in the very midst of this hot-bed of misery and crime. What chance had they of leading decent lives when they were dismissed from the prison? What chance, indeed, had any of those wretched women, however slight their offence had been, who had passed any length of time within those walls?

But now let us see what influences went to the making of the brave woman whose life-work was to alter all this. Elizabeth Gurney was born in 1780 of a staunch old Quaker family, and spent most of her young days amid the high elms and picturesque walks of Earlham Hall, near Norwich.

She seems to have been a singularly timid child, dreading to be left alone in the dark, and so afraid of making mistakes that her teachers put her down as stupid and unintelligent in the schoolroom. The loss of a dearly loved mother when she was twelve years old left her to grow up a morbid, introspective girl, in spite of the wholesome "give and take" generally found in a large family. Mr. Gurney was by no means a strict Quaker, and encouraged his eleven children in merriment and cheerful amusements. Dances were often held at the Hall, and there were frequent visits paid to Norwich for the sake of the excellent music for which that town is famous.

Elizabeth entered keenly into all such diversions. She was by nature both emotional and sensitive. Music made her at times, she says, "almost beside herself"; but she was subject to violent reactions of feeling, in which she seems to have been very uneasy as to the effect all such enjoyments had upon her.

Religion, in those days, was a hard taskmaster to Elizabeth Gurney. She seems to have found in it no joy, no sweetness. She shrank from the silence and self-discipline of the "Meeting," and yet was ill at ease at the concert or the ball. Much of this morbid feeling was due no doubt to the fact

that she had never as yet found the secret of religion—her mind rebelled against what to her were unnatural though constraining rules of life, and her heart had never been touched. Much also may be traced to the delicacy which haunted her girlish days, and evidently led to an unbalanced and unhealthy frame of mind.

Just after her seventeenth birthday, for example, she writes in her diary, "It is a great comfort to me that life is short and soon passes way; yet it is certainly a blessing to exist. I think I have now no reason to wish to die, I am so well; but I must own, with ill-health such as I used to have, life is a burden."

One feels inclined nowadays to prescribe a wholesome course of hard work, mental or physical, for such a state of mind; but in those times long hours of leisure, or days filled only with the most trivial household duties, were the rule; and hence a large amount of "world-weariness" became the fashion among the maidens who were introspective enough to keep a diary at all. She herself seems to have been conscious of the need of some absorbing interest in life.

"I am now seventeen," she writes, "and if some kind and great circumstance does not happen to me, I shall have my talents devoured by moth and rust. They will lose their brightness, lose their virtue, and one day they will prove a curse instead of a blessing. Dreaded day! I must use extreme exertion to act really right, to avoid idleness and dissipation."

Fortunately for her, the awakening soon came.

A certain William Savery, a "strict Friend," visited Norwich and held a kind of Mission there. He was much shocked by the "marks of wealth and grandeur, which," he writes, "are too evident in several families of Friends in this place," and he doubted much if the "younger branches" could be induced to "choose the simple safe path of self-denial."

Elizabeth gaily attired, and wearing, as her sister noted with amusement, a pair of purple boots laced with scarlet, attended the meeting held by William Savery. Her heart was touched by his simple, direct words. "She wept," says her sister, "and became a good deal agitated." The next day the preacher came to Earlham Hall, and singling her out from her brothers and sisters, he prophesied that she "should be one who should bind up the broken-hearted, proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

"From that day her love of pleasure and of the world seemed gone."

These are again her sister's words, and they only serve to show how seldom the human heart is understood by those nearest and dearest to it.

For during the next two years Elizabeth's journals betray a constant strife between the natural desires of a girl of her age for enjoyment and amusement and the feeling that she should deny herself all such in preparation for the unknown

work to which she was called. Moreover, she was much troubled by the knowledge of the annoyance and misunderstanding which the adoption of any very strict rule of life would cause her family. And still her physical cowardice and lack of self-confidence remained unaltered, and augured ill for the undertaking of any important mission in life.

One tiny bit of work was begun, however, though still with hesitation. "I have still some thought," she writes, "of having several poor children to read in the Testament and religious books for an hour on Sunday evening. I have begun with Billy, but I hope to continue and increase one by one. I should think it a good plan; but I must not even begin that hastily."

Commencing with one small boy, Elizabeth gathered together in time a considerable class—a little school, in fact—of seventy children, who met in an empty laundry, and were taught entirely by her. It seems very probable that here, in the control of a large number of mischievous, restless little beings of all ages, she first found the self-reliance and power of managing herself and others which were absolutely necessary for the accomplishment of her future work. It was about a year after her "conversion" that Elizabeth threw in her lot definitely with the "plain Quakers," by adopting the white cap and folded neckerchief, as well as the "thee and thou" of their mode of address. Within another year she was married to Joseph Fry.

The change from the regular occupation of

teaching her little flock at Earlham to the somewhat unsettled state of the first year of married life in London came hard to the young wife. Her mind was naturally somewhat slow and contemplative, and the state of "bustle," as she calls it, of visiting and being visited, and the mixing with society which Mr. Fry's position as partner in a large firm involved, was an evident worry to her. Perhaps the remembrance of that call to a high work was always with her, and beside that mysterious and unknown vocation all else seemed trivial.

But other and more intimate interests soon claimed her attention. In the pretty country house at Plashet to which they moved in 1809 a large family of sons and daughters began to grow up around her, but they by no means absorbed all her time and care. The poor and ignorant Irish settlers in the place, the wandering gipsies who sometimes pitched their tent at her gates, all knew of her benevolence and exertions on their behalf. But this was not the occasion of the call.

In 1812 she thought she heard the voice more clearly. It seemed as though her duty as a Quaker bade her leave her family, much against her will, to undertake a round of visits to the various meeting-houses of the Friends, to preach and exhort those who attended them. It was while she was upon this mission that she met and conversed with four Quakers who had just come from visiting some prisoners in Newgate who were about to be executed. With horror in their voices, they described the scenes they had witnessed in the women's quarters

of the prison. And thus the call came, clear and distinct, to the life-work of Elizabeth Fry.

It was no easy task for a nervous, highly-strung, emotional woman to contemplate with equanimity. Before her first visit to Newgate, in company with one other lady, they were warned to remove the watches they wore, lest they should be snatched from them by the viragoes. But she never hesitated.

"The sorrowful and neglected condition of these depraved women and their miserable children, dwelling in such a vortex of corruption," writes her daughter, "deeply sank into her heart, although at this time nothing more was done than to supply the most destitute with clothes."

Four years, indeed, she had to wait for her real beginnings of reform. The cares of her large family of children, money troubles, ill-health, all kept her fully occupied. But when the time came she was ready with a well matured plan. In 1817 she revisited Newgate, and at her urgent request was left alone with the women for some hours. Her experience may be told in the words of one who heard it from her own lips. "The railing was crowded with half-naked women, struggling together for the front situations with the most boisterous violence and begging with the utmost vociferation. She felt as if she were going into a den of wild beasts; and she well recollects quite shuddering when the door closed upon her and she was locked in with such a herd of novel and desperate companions."

But over these wild and passionate hearts

Elizabeth Fry at once began to exercise a marvellous influence. Gathering them round her, she read to them the parable of the Lord in the vineyard, reminding them that even they, the poor souls called at the eleventh hour, had yet a full share of His love and mercy, if they would but hear Him. And then she at once began to explain her plan of setting up a school within the prison for their unhappy children, who were growing up with the taint of sin upon them.

"She desired them to consider the plan, for without their steady co-operation she would not undertake it; leaving it to them to select a governess from amongst themselves."

An empty cell was given her as schoolroom, and there, when first opened, came not only the children, but their mothers, "earnestly entreating to be admitted."

So, working through their love for their little ones, Mrs. Fry began gradually to give them back the self-respect for want of which they were sinking so fast into the abyss of sin and misery.

In that same year her unwearying exertions formed a little Association for the Improvement of Female Prisoners in Newgate, which provided for the clothing, teaching, and employment of the women, "and to form in them, as much as possible, those habits of order, sobriety, and industry which may render them docile and peaceable whilst in prison, and respectable when they leave it."

Next year a still larger work began to occupy her attention. Those were the days of transportation

to New South Wales, and the transit of a new batch of prisoners from the prison to the docks was always a scene of disgraceful rioting and drunkenness.

When this, with difficulty, was put a stop to, it was found to be of very little use to train the women in quiet and decent habits whilst in prison or on the convict ship, if on their arrival they were practically deserted, without clothes, shelter, or other protection. Arrangements for the alteration of this mismanagement took no little time and pains to accomplish; and then the brave woman, though much worried by private concerns, set to work to get the law altered by which men, women, and children were hanged for such petty offences as stealing a sheep or a fowl.

Nor was it only with the prison that she concerned herself. The opening of a House of Refuge for discharged prisoners and of a Reformatory for the poor little sin-hardened girls of the London streets were among her chief interests at one time, before she gave herself up entirely to the arduous work of Inspector of Prisons.

In order to compare the different systems of punishment, Mrs. Fry visited several European countries, and brought back to England suggestions of reform which were promptly adopted by those whom she had at length stirred up to a sense of the responsibility of their position.

During all this time, however, she by no means neglected her family ties. Sometimes she laid aside her public duties for years together, when her

own ill-health and that of her dear ones summoned her to rest or change of work.

But in 1841, when she was sixty-one years of age, she was still actively engaged in her life-work, and visited in that year the prisons of most of the chief towns of the Continent.

Everywhere she went she did not hesitate to suggest reforms and improvements; so that not only the prisoners of England, but also of Europe, might well rise up and call her blessed.

The last days of this single-minded woman were full of sadness. Within a few weeks she lost her favourite sister, her beloved son, and two grandchildren. "Can our mother hear this and live?" was the awestruck question of her remaining children; and the shock was in truth a terrible one.

Still, however, she kept a brave heart, knowing that ere long "she would be summoned to join the band that was mustering so strongly on the other side of Jordan." One great joy was hers. "She had the happiness of knowing that Newgate, Bridewell, and all the other great London prisons were now in a state of comparative order; some exceedingly well arranged."

But the years of strenuous labour had worn her out before her time. She died very peacefully in the year 1845, in the midst of her family, not forgotten by that larger band of children, outcasts of society though they were, whom she had tended with a true mother's care.

She had never been of a commanding personality, nor had she great gifts of persuasion and eloquence,

so that one might perhaps wonder what really was the secret of her power over the wayward and unruly of this earth. A strong sense of her divine mission no doubt went far to inspire her with the strength of will and self-confidence which were certainly not natural to her. But her real secret of influence was her trust in and love for these unfortunates. Even the most hardened criminal would break down before her kindly touch and encouraging word. "I trust I shall hear better things of thee," was her strongest form of reproof; and it stirred up a determination to do well which effected more than any legal measures for the improvement of the prisoners.

When we look back at her wayward, difficult girlhood, her indecisions and scruples, and compare it with the splendid fruition of her womanhood, we can but feel that she was pre-eminently one who "being called unto a good work, perfected it unto the end."

JANE AUSTEN
From a painting by her sister Cassandra

JANE AUSTEN

"A great observer, . . . looks
Quite through the deeds of men."
SHAKESPEARE, *Julius Cæsar*

THERE stands one amongst our group of famous women to whom, though she appears to shrink into the background in an effort to escape our notice, the highest honours given to literary women are rightly due. For Jane Austen was more than a mere writer of fiction, a teller of pleasant tales. She had the rare gift of making what is commonplace interesting, and of reading human nature with such keen observation that she could paint the ordinary everyday person in such a way as to show him in a new and extraordinary light. No human being was "commonplace" to her, and hence her characters are the most living in the world. Everyone who has read *Pride and Prejudice* feels he has made of "Mrs. Bennett" a lifelong friend — to be laughed at, indeed, but never to be forgotten; and all who have any knowledge of the life of a small country town have made the acquaintance of "Miss Bates."

The life of Jane Austen is as quiet as the

atmosphere of her books. She was born in a comfortable country vicarage in 1775, the youngest of a family of five sons and two daughters. Her father was vicar of the little Hampshire village of Steventon, and here she passed the first twenty-five years of her life amid commonplace scenery and commonplace surroundings. If scenery has that influence on character with which it is generally credited, we cannot fail to see the quiet, comfortable, well-to-do country parish in every line of her writings, just as we breathe

> "the breath of the moors fresh blown
> O'er leagues of clover and cold grey stone"

in the pages of the Brontës.

Perhaps if she had possessed a very vivid imagination, the tameness of her surroundings would have driven her to wild realms of fancy and "faery lands forlorn." But Jane's faculty of observation was her strongest point, and this led her instead to the more difficult if less attractive task of weaving her stories from the material that lay at her very doors. Many a girl would have found her existence dull to the last degree. But fortunately for us, as well as for herself, Jane possessed the gift of humour, said to be so rare among women, which has the power of turning grey to silver, and of fetching sparks out of the most impenetrable of flints.

The Austen family, though not wealthy, was quite "comfortable," as they would say in the country districts, and like most clergymen of good birth,

Mr. Austen was accustomed to mix with all the society that was to be found in and around Steventon. Both he and his wife were unusually well-educated people, and thus the large family of children grew up in a cultured atmosphere, full of the clever talk and merry jest that make home-life so delightful.

From the first the chief devotion of little Jane, the "baby" of the family, was given to her sister Cassandra, nearly four years her senior.

"If Cassandra were going to have her head cut off, Jane would insist on sharing her fate," her mother would say, with a laugh. And sure enough, when the day came for the elder girl to set off for boarding-school, Jane worked herself into such a passion of misery that there was nothing for it but to send her too.

Throughout their lives this devotion remained. Their letters to one another might have been those between two lovers, so full they are of the warmest, most enthusiastic affection; and nothing was ever published by Jane till it had first been read to Cassandra and discussed with her. The days of boarding-school were few, however.

The two girls were educated almost entirely at home, and no better than most women of that age, though Jane was a good French scholar and could read Italian. She was a great reader, however, though her critical taste was scarcely to be commended; for while Crabbe, Cowper, Johnson, and Scott were her favourite poets, she put Crabbe far above the rest—possibly because

in powers of observation and of drawing clear-cut pictures of ordinary life they were much akin. She tells us that she always hated "solid reading," and indeed one of her chief delights in girlhood was in needlework or anything that required deft fingers to accomplish; but her frequent mention of new books shows that she was by no means the "ignorant and uninformed" person she would, in her modesty, have us believe.

When she was quite a child her love for writing was strongly developed. Later on she seems to have wished she had "written less and read more" before she was sixteen; but no doubt her "scribbling" served as an excellent apprenticeship to her future work. A play called *The Mystery*, written when she was about twelve years old, still exists, and shows at any rate a touch of the humour and swift though unobtrusive action to be found in the novels. But the characters are caricatures, and thus very different from the finished portraits of her riper years.

Five years later another attempt was made in *Lady Susan*, a story told in letters, which was thrown aside by her as unworthy of notice by anyone save the members of her own family. And then Jane grew up, and laid aside her pen for a while to take her place in the social world of Steventon as the "younger Miss Austen."

According to her portrait at this period, she was a pretty, curly-haired girl, with a singularly bright face, laughing eyes, and merry lips. Most of her brothers were married by this time, and

Jane herself was much admired at the county balls and country dances; but she seems to have laughed at love-making with that utter lack of sentimentality which we find again and again in her novels. Of one very persistent lover she writes to her sister, "He has but one fault, which time will, I trust, entirely remove—it is that his morning coat is a great deal too light." And again: "I rather expect to receive an offer from my friend in the course of the evening. I shall refuse him, however, unless he promises to give away his white coat." Other suitors pressed her hard, but Jane's heart remained safely in her own keeping. Once and once only does it seem to have been really touched, and then the affair was treated with such reticence that none save Cassandra knew of it.

It was a brief romance indeed. A young clergyman fell deeply in love with her during a seaside visit to Devon. Nothing definite was said, but on their departure he urgently desired that he might visit them, and to this Jane, to her sister's surprise, agreed. Before anything could be arranged as to the meeting, he died quite suddenly; and as Jane never mentioned him to anyone save her sister, nothing was thought of it at the time. But the brief and tragic little romance accounts probably for the fact that the brilliant and popular girl remained unmarried to the end of her life.

After her first few months of "Society," Jane returned to her desk with renewed vigour. She did

not make of her writing a serious occupation, and never mentions it in her long letters to her sister. She did not even carry it on in a separate room, but sat in the vicarage sitting-room, where all the family came in and out at their will, and where visitors were frequent and welcome.

Thus *Pride and Prejudice*, finished when she was one-and-twenty, was written in the very midst of family and social life; but she carefully concealed the fact of her writing from the outer world, who, if they caught her at her little mahogany desk, thought no doubt that she was making up the accounts for the clothing club or writing out a recipe for gooseberry wine.

When her first book was finished, her father wrote to ask Mr. Cadell the publisher if he would undertake it at the author's expense. But alas for girlish hopes! The great man would not even look at the manuscript, which unluckily had not been sent him at first. Fortunately, she did not give up writing in consequence of this rebuff, though she had even less time than usual to give to it. In 1801 Mr. Austen gave up his work at Steventon, and on Jane, the daughter most often at home, fell the duty of arranging the move and of settling her parents in their new home at Bath.

The "city of invalids" was no very cheerful abiding-place for a lively young woman, and though she managed to get a great deal of fun out of her neighbours, she was clearly bored by their tame frivolities. She managed to finish

Northanger Abbey, however, and even to dispose of it to a local bookseller and publisher for the magnificent sum of ten pounds. But there it ended; for the worthy tradesman made no attempt to publish it, and the careful work and frequent polishing Jane had bestowed upon it seemed utterly wasted.

Then her father died, and Mrs. Austen with her two daughters moved to Southampton. This was a barren period; the four years they spent there were uncongenial to all, and when one of the sons offered his mother and sisters a home at Chawton Cottage, a pleasant house on his Hampshire estate, they gladly accepted it. Once more Jane was among her own people, in a house large enough to receive any of the family who could visit them, including a number of the nephews and nieces to whom "Aunt Jane" was a never failing source of delight and interest. One of these last wrote of her after her death:—

"As a very little girl, I was always creeping after Aunt Jane, in the house and out of it. Her first charm to children was great sweetness of manner. She seemed to love you, and you loved her in return. This was what I felt in my early days, before I was old enough to be amused by her cleverness. But soon came the delight of her playful talk; she could make everything amusing to a child."

One likes to think of her so completely happy in that home-life which was to be, after all, so very brief, and to know that at length her ready pen was to gain some measure of reward for the

work to which it now returned. It was not until she was thirty-six years of age that *Sense and Sensibility* was published, but it at once became a brilliant success. Characteristically enough, her only remark when she received one hundred and fifty pounds for it was that it was a great deal to earn with so little trouble.

The ease, indeed, with which she wrote her long novels, with their minute study of character, is only less wonderful than her absolute unselfconsciousness and humility. But she was naturally deeply interested in the fate of her "brain-children." In 1813, *Pride and Prejudice*, her first and finest work, which had been scornfully rejected on its previous attempt to win a way for itself, was published.

"I feel that I must write to you to-day," she tells her sister a few days after its publication. "I want to tell you that I have got my own darling child from London." Then she goes on to describe how her mother read it aloud to an unsuspecting neighbour, who "really does seem to admire Elizabeth." "I must confess," she writes anent the charming heroine of that book, "I think her as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print, and how I shall be able to tolerate those who do not like *her* at least, I do not know. . . . Now I will try and write of something else."

Within the next four years appeared *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, *Persuasion*, and *Northanger Abbey*, the last rescued from the short-sighted publisher of Bath. The first three all show Miss Austen at her best; for if they lack the *verve* and brilliant

wit of *Pride and Prejudice*, they are more marked by ease and maturity of style, and especially by her increased power of painting character. *Emma* is perhaps the finest of all, though Jane herself was so convinced of its future unpopularity that she said of her chief character, "I am going to take a heroine whom no one but myself will much like."

However that might be, it was *Emma* that won for her from the Prince Regent, the future George IV., the unexpected compliment of an invitation to view his library at Carlton House, as a gracious intimation that she might dedicate her next work to him. His librarian indeed went further, and after modestly requesting that she would make him the hero of her next novel, suggested that "an historical romance, illustrative of the august House of Coburg, would just now be very interesting."

We can imagine how Miss Austen's eyes would twinkle as she answered with strained politeness, "I am fully sensible that an historical romance founded on the House of Saxe-Coburg might be much more to the purpose of profit and popularity than such pictures of domestic life in country villages as I deal in. But I could no more write a romance than an epic poem. I could not sit seriously down to write a serious romance under any other motive than to save my life; and if it were indispensable for me to keep it up, and never relax into laughing at myself or at other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the

first chapter. No, I must keep to my own style and go on in my own way; and though I may never succeed again in that, I am convinced that I should totally fail in any other."

The publication of *Emma* had very sad associations for its author. While she was staying with her brother Henry in town, in order to see it through the press, the latter became alarmingly ill, and lay for weeks at death's door. The terrible strain and anxiety of this illness told very heavily on Jane's health and nerves; and scarcely had Henry begun to recover, when by the breaking of a bank the whole Austen family found themselves involved in heavy money losses. Perhaps the years of uneventful happiness had been a bad preparation for the sudden batch of troubles. Her health and spirits began to fail steadily, though before the members of her own family she still wore an appearance of cheerfulness that deceived them as to her true condition.

But still, though unable to walk or drive at all, or even to sit upright without discomfort, she continued to write, finishing her last novel, *Persuasion*, as usual, in the midst of her family, though obliged to lie stretched out on chairs, since the one sofa of the little drawing-room was always dedicated to the use of her aged mother.

In the beginning of 1817 her strength seemed in some measure to return, and she began a new novel. But the flame of life was only flickering before it was extinguished altogether. Her sister took her to Winchester, in the vain hope of medical

aid; and from thence she writes to her nieces in her usual tender, half-mocking style, assuring them of the love and care with which she is surrounded. She died in July 1817, in the midst of her growing fame, when she was but forty-two, and was buried in the beautiful Cathedral she had always so much admired.

The touching letters written by her relations after her death show that to them the great charm of Jane's life lay in her bright, sweet, unselfish nature. Her brothers and sister never realised, probably, how really great, in her own line, were her achievements. "A woman first, a writer afterwards," that was her aim in life, and she certainly succeeded in living up to it.

But to the reading public there came at length some real appreciation of her work. Sir Walter Scott's words are well known, but they afford such an excellent summary of her best points that we quote them in conclusion. He writes in his Journal: "Read again for the third time at least Miss Austen's finely written novel of *Pride and Prejudice.* That young lady had a talent for describing the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The big Bow-Wow strain I can do myself like anyone now going; but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment is denied to me. What a pity such a gifted creature died so early!"

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

"Oh, pleasant, pleasant were the days,
The time, when, in our childish plays,
My sister Emmeline and I
Together chased the butterfly!
A very hunter did I rush
Upon the prey:—with leaps and springs
I followed on from brake to bush;
But she, God love her! feared to brush
The dust from off its wings."

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, *To a Butterfly*

THIS little maiden, whose sensitive soul shrank from injuring a butterfly, grew up to be one of the simplest and yet one of the grandest characters in our gallery of noble women. Her brother, for poetical reasons, calls her "Emmeline" here, but her real name was Dorothy, true "gift of God" to that same poet-brother. For William Wordsworth, in many respects the greatest of our modern poets, tells us plainly more than once of the huge debt he owed to this younger sister; and we may even go so far as to say that much of his beautiful, thoughtful work would never have been accomplished if it had not been for the ideal kept before him and the encouragement given him by her.

Dorothy Wordsworth was born in 1771, two years

after her brother, and soon developed into an eager, sensitive little maiden, never quite happy unless she were running wild on the fells round Cockermouth, learning lessons from the wise old lips of Mother Nature herself. When she was six years old her mother died, and the children—four boys and one girl—were scattered. Her favourite brother, William, went to live in the quaint old market town of Hawkshead, in order to attend the grammar-school, and Dorothy was brought up by some cousins at Halifax.

For thirteen years she lived in this smoky, ugly town, without a chance of seeing the beloved school-boy brother; but the memory of the Cumberland fells and lakes was strong within her, and it was with a sense of recovering lost years that she, a girl of nineteen, found herself once more in their midst, together with William, at that time an undergraduate at Cambridge. Then it was that the elder brother discovered the girl's rare understanding and appreciation of Nature—a gift which from that period made her his most precious companion.

At this time, however, she was little more than that; but, as we shall see, a time was to come when Dorothy became in a very special way the guardian of William's intellect and genius; when her sweet and womanly character formed for him an ideal which had much to do with turning his thought into certain directions and making him one of our greatest thinkers and poets. To her his earliest poems, some of which were no doubt inspired

during the long delightful wanderings of this holiday, were dedicated.

During the next four years William spent much of his time in France, and Dorothy saw but little of him.

It was the day of the French Revolution, and Wordsworth was among those ardent spirits who, when the movement first began, thought it was going to bring about a vast improvement, moral, physical, and intellectual, for the unhappy and down-trodden peasants of all countries. The freedom of Nature was to be theirs, when once the existing state of things was done away, and all men were to live in peace together on equal terms of brotherhood. Instead of the fulfilment of this fair dream, he saw the beginning of the awful Reign of Terror, and heard

> "a voice that cried
> To the whole city "Sleep no more!"

So he returned home, a disappointed, disillusioned man, much inclined to think that because the Republic had proved to be a failure the whole wide world was "out of joint."

Fortunately, it was to the wise and tender sympathy of Dorothy that he first turned. Together they made long excursions on foot. "I walked," she writes in one of her letters, "with my brother at my side, from Kendal to Grasmere, eighteen miles, and afterwards from Grasmere to Keswick, fifteen miles, through the most delightful country that was ever seen. We are now at a farmhouse

about half a mile from Keswick. When I came I intended to stay only a few days; but the country is so delightful, and above all I have so full an enjoyment of my brother's company, that I have determined to stay a few weeks longer."

The months that followed were full of anxiety for Dorothy. Her beloved brother was still restless and disturbed in mind; as he says himself, it was a time when

> "the fretful stir
> Unprofitable and the fever of the world
> Have hung upon the beatings of my heart."

He could not decide what should be his work in life, and yet it was imperative that he should earn money to provide for even the simple wants of his sister and himself. He had written very little poetry, and had made no mark as a poet; but Dorothy was more certain of his true vocation than he himself seems to have been, and her eager encouragement kept him true to this high ideal. Just at this time, too, in 1794, the bequest of one of the few outside friends who believed in his genius enabled him to put aside the pressing need of obtaining more lucrative employment, and to enjoy leisure for thought and study of Nature.

It was a tiny income on which the two were to live, but they cared nothing for that. It gave them a home—"the first home I ever had," she calls it—at Racedown, in Dorsetshire; and there William wrote and thought and read his poetry aloud, while Dorothy studied Italian, managed the house, and

watched over her brother with jealous care. Gradually the troubled period of the Revolution ceased to affect the poet; and it was Dorothy who brought his feet back to the paths of peace, by showing him it was by a truer return to Nature than that of the Revolution, which would best solve the problems of the world.

> "She gave me eyes, she gave me ears,
> And humble cares, and delicate fears,
> A heart, the fountain of sweet tears,
> And love, and thought, and joy."

At Racedown they first made the acquaintance of one who was to become a lifelong friend. "You had a great loss," Dorothy writes to a friend, "in not seeing Coleridge. He is a wonderful man. His conversation teems with soul, mind, and spirit. Then he is so benevolent, so good-tempered and cheerful, and like William, interests himself so much about every trifle. At first I thought him very plain—that is, for about three minutes. He is pale, thin, has a wide mouth, thick lips and not very good teeth, longish, loose-growing, half-curling rough black hair. But if you hear him speak for five minutes you think no more of them. His eye is large and full, and not very dark but grey: it speaks every emotion of his animated mind. . . . The first thing that was read after he came was William's new poem, the *Ruined Cottage*, with which he was much delighted."

Such close friends did the three become that in 1797 the Wordsworths went to live at Alfoxden,

in Somersetshire, in order to be nearer the home of Coleridge. Dorothy's description of the country shows that the remembrance of her beloved Lake Country is still strong in her mind. "There is everything here; sea, woods wild as fancy ever painted, brooks clear and pebbly as in Cumberland, villages so romantic; and William and I, in a wander by ourselves, found out a sequestered waterfall, in a dell formed by steep hills covered with full-grown timber trees. The country has the character of the less grand parts of the neighbourhood of the Lakes."

In this quiet home a happy, uneventful year was passed — uneventful, that is, as far as the world of physical action is concerned, but not as regards the larger world of poetry and thought. For it was during an autumn walk along the sea-coast from Minehead to Lynmouth that the two poets planned the lay of the *Ancient Mariner*, reciting it as they walked in the cloudy November afternoon to the responsive and enthusiastic Dorothy. This was the germ of the *Lyrical Ballads*, which has ever since been famous as the first work of the two poets. Before the collection was complete, it included the *Lines written above Tintern Abbey*, in which William openly pays tribute to all that his sister had done for him during his troubled years:—

> "Nor, perchance,
> If I were not thus taught, should I the more
> Suffer my genial spirits to decay;
> For thou art with me, here upon the banks
> Of this fair river, thou my dearest friend,
> My dear, dear friend; and in thy voice I catch

The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasure in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear sister! . . . Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain winds be free
To blow against thee; and in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure, when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me."

Here the influence of Dorothy in keeping him true to his early love of Nature is clearly seen. Many of his poems of this period, too, are a poetical version of their discussions and of the events of their daily life. Hence it was she who not only restored to him his ideal, but also kept his home so peaceful and free from petty cares that he was able to expand in thought and fancy, and so fulfil his high calling.

Much encouragement was needed also; for Wordsworth was still to remain for twenty years one who was "the scoff of the world, his poetry a by-word for scorn"; and it was perhaps to soften the disappointment caused by the chilly reception of the *Lyrical Ballads* that the brother and sister travelled to Germany and stayed there for a year. But neither the climate nor the philosophy of Germany was congenial, and they hastened back at the end of a year, Dorothy to

stay with old friends, the Hutchinson family, at Penrith, while William set off with Coleridge for a tour of the Lake District.

Years before, in one of his earliest poems, Wordsworth had spoken of a spot,

> "Where peace to Grasmere's lonely island leads,
> To willowy hedgerows and to emerald meads,
> Leads to her bridge, rude church, and cottaged grounds,
> Her rocky sheep walks and her woodland bounds."

It was therefore in the lovely vale of Grasmere, nestling under the broad shoulder of Helvellyn, that he now found a tiny house, well named Dove Cottage, which was to be their peaceful refuge for many years.

It stood on the roadside, looking upon the "lonely island" of the lake, with a sloping and rocky garden and orchard behind. Thither the brother and sister walked on foot to take possession some twenty-one miles on the shortest day of the year, passing with glad hearts through the frosty roads and snowy woods to the warm little nest where so many fine ideas were to be thought out and so much beautiful poetry written.

It was during the happy months after their arrival that Wordsworth tells us once more what his sister had been to him:—

> "Mine eyes did ne'er
> Fix on a lovely object, nor my mind
> Take pleasure in the midst of happy thoughts,
> But either she, whom now I have, who now
> Divides with me that loved abode, was there,
> Or not far off. Where'er my footsteps turned

Her voice was like a hidden bird that sang;
The thought of her was like a flash of light,
Or an unseen companionship, a breath
Of fragrance independent of the wind."

Moreover, she was of real practical help in his work. Hers were often the vivid, telling descriptions of a beggar-woman or a little maiden's talk to her pet lamb, which gave the poet the material for his poetry. Her description of the daffodils, seen by them on a walk to Gowbarrow Park, near Ullswater, gave him the very words for one of his loveliest poems:—

"I never saw daffodils so beautiful. They grew among the mossy stones; some rested their heads on these stones as on a pillow; the rest tossed and reeled and danced, and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind, they looked so gay and glancing."

To those whose life is passed in the midst of noise and unrest, who rush from one exciting amusement to another, or the conditions of whose work forbids the vision of

"that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,"

the quiet happiness and joy experienced by Dorothy Wordsworth, in her uneventful life and tranquil surroundings, must be perfectly incomprehensible. Her mind was a gallery of beautiful pictures, whereas the minds of many people are rather like a cinematograph, with its hurrying, worrying bustle and change of scene.

Here is one of her pictures, painted in words by her, after a quiet evening's walk:—"The Lake of Grasmere beautiful; the church an image of peace; the mountains indistinct: the lake calm and partly ruffled; a sweet sound of water falling into the quiet lake. A storm gathering in Easedale, so we returned; but the moon came out, and opened to us the church and village. Helm Crag in shade; the larger mountains dappled like a sky."

Wordsworth's marriage in 1802 with Mary Hutchinson, whom he describes so perfectly in the poem "She was a phantom of delight," served only to draw the three closer together. Mary was a gentle soul, all peace and serenity, ready to smooth away the rough places in the path of her beloved husband, while Dorothy, eager and enthusiastic, was always on ahead, beckoning him to higher flights of fancy. Mary loved to keep the nest warm at Dove Cottage, and to watch over "Baby John," while Dorothy walked long miles with her brother and Coleridge in a delightful expedition to Scotland, of which her Journal gives a vivid description. The frugal nature of the little household is shown in one or two charmingly graphic touches. Thus Dorothy writes: "On our return, we found Mary in perfect health . . . and little John asleep in the *clothes-basket by the fire*."

The description given by De Quincey, one of our finest English prose-writers, makes us almost see the very scene he paints.

"I was ushered," he says, "up a little flight of stairs . . . to a little drawing-room, or rather 'half-

kitchen and half-parlour,' as Wordsworth himself describes it. It was not fully seven feet six inches high; . . . there was, however, in a small recess, a library of perhaps three hundred volumes which seemed to consecrate the room as the poet's study and composing room, and such occasionally it was. . . . The tea-hour with the Wordsworths was the most delightful meal in the day; just as dinner is in great cities and for the same reason—because it was prolonged into a meal of leisure and conversation. . . . In the morning . . . I found Miss Wordsworth making breakfast in the little sitting-room. No urn was there, no glittering breakfast service; a kettle boiled upon the fire; I rarely had seen so humble a *ménage*. On the third morning after my arrival, I found the whole family, except the two children, prepared for the expedition across the mountains. I had heard of no horses . . . but at the moment of starting, a cart—the common farmer's cart of the country—made its appearance, and the driver was a bonny young woman of the vale. . . . Our style of travelling occasioned no astonishment; on the contrary, we met a smiling salutation wherever we appeared."

Some years after his marriage, the poet removed to larger quarters at Rydal Mount, between Grasmere and Ambleside, and here Dorothy's days became busier still; for Wordsworth was composing the long poem of the *Excursion* and others by no means brief, and as he much disliked the labour of writing, his sister became his willing pen-woman.

But Dorothy's eager nature wore out her physical powers before her time. For the last twenty-five years of her life she was a confirmed invalid, and she whose feet had passed so lightly over her beloved mountains never left her couch. "She is very feeble," writes her brother, "and never quits her room. She does not suffer much pain, and is very cheerful; and nothing troubles her but the sense of requiring so much attention." He tells also of a robin which, of his own free will, made his permanent home in her room, perching at night on a nail in the wall, and flapping his tiny wings as though to fan her face.

Though her joyous days of vigorous strength and delight in Nature were over, she still rejoiced in the remembrance of the past, and loved to recall it to her brother's mind. In spite of her long illness, she survived the poet nearly five years, dying in January 1855, at the age of eighty-three. In that hallowed spot of earth beneath the yew tree of Grasmere Churchyard, under the shade of the old grey tower, she sleeps by her brother's side, while their well-loved river Rotha sings their requiem.

"What a dull, uneventful life!" some will say; and others will wonder why, with her strong poetic instinct, she did not write poetry herself and become famous in the world of letters.

But the sisterly devotion which was the mainspring of her life was to Dorothy a far higher ideal than either fame or the joy of creation. We are told that the absent-minded poet would

sometimes, when miles from home, be seized with a sudden inspiration and write some charming fragment of verse on a stone by the wayside with a bit of slate refuse for his pen; then striding on ahead would be lost again in his world of fancy. And Dorothy's self-appointed task was to lift the heavy stone and carry it home, toiling in the wake of her brother's footsteps, but more than happy in her lot.

The incident is a parable of her whole life. She found her joy in William's fame, her happiness in the fact that she was always his closest confidante, his inspiration, in the highest sense his "help-meet."

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

MARY SOMERVILLE

From a drawing in chalks by James Rannie Swinton, 1848

MARY SOMERVILLE

"Knowledge is no more a fountain sealed."
TENNYSON, *The Princess*

THE name of Somerville College, Oxford, is familiar enough to girls of the present day, some of whom have perhaps found the delights of higher education within its walls; but not many, even of these, know much of the struggle for knowledge which beset the life-work of the distinguished woman who gives that College its name.

Mary Fairfax was born in the year 1780, and passed most of her early life in the little Scotch seaport town of Burntisland, just opposite Edinburgh, on the coast of Fife. A delightful home was hers—a long, old-fashioned house, with a great walled garden stretching down to a plot of short grass covering a ledge of black, sea-washed rocks. What better playground could there be for a lonely little maid who never cared for dolls, but who, from very early years, was keenly interested in all living, moving objects of Nature!

Birds were her chief delight. One of her earliest recollections is of watching the strings of wild geese pass across the grey autumn skies

with their curious whistling rustle, and of her amusement at seeing the clumsy tame fat geese which were feeding on the Links rise in a body and try to follow them. And her first real grief was caused by the death of a pet mountain sparrow, who was her constant companion, sitting on her shoulder, pecking at her book, and eating out of her mouth.

Her mother taught her to read the Bible and to say her prayers, but as far as other education was concerned she was allowed "to grow up a wild creature." But she learnt to be useful in the dairy, to feed the poultry, and to pick the fruit for preserving; and it was on one of these last occasions that her first unpremeditated lesson in experimental science was received.

She had filled a number of bottles with green gooseberries, which her mother bade her take to the cook and bid her boil the bottles uncorked, till the fruit was sufficiently cooked. Either Mary or the servant forgot the latter part of the message, for presently all the house was alarmed by a series of loud explosions and terrific screams. The bottles had been corked before they were boiled, and of course the pressure of the expanding gas within had exploded the bottles.

Mary's next step in education took place when she was made to learn the Catechism of the Scottish Kirk and to attend the public examinations thereupon. She dreaded these ordeals, which were attended by all the children in the place, together with their mothers and a large number of very

critical old women. Mary was very shy and nervous, and understood not a word of the mystic formula which she was forced to learn by heart; so she acquitted herself shockingly. This fact was laid before her sailor-father when he returned from one of his long voyages. An informal examination was held; and the unfortunate Mary, unable to write, and only able to read *Robinson Crusoe* and the *Pilgrim's Progress* with a strong Scotch accent, was openly condemned. For some weeks she had to stumble tearfully over a paper of the *Spectator* aloud to her father every morning after breakfast. It meant less than nothing to the child, who spelt it out in stupefied fashion, only regaining her natural brightness when she was allowed to shut the hated book and "go and help father in the garden."

Then at length the decree went forth: "This kind of life will never do; Mary must at least know how to write and keep accounts." So the ten-year-old child was sent to Miss Primrose's boarding-school at Musselburgh, where real troubles began to cross her path. The restraint of regular hours and much schoolroom-life was hard to bear after the breezy garden and the wave-swept rocks of Burntisland; but it was not the worst.

"A few days after my arrival," she tells us in her *Recollections*, "although perfectly straight and well-made, I was enclosed in stiff stays with a steel busk in front, while above my frock bands drew my shoulders back till the blades met. Then a steel rod, with a semicircle which went under the chin,

was clasped to the steel busk. In this constrained state I had to prepare my lessons."

And then what an education for a child of quick observation and eager, restless, inquiring mind! "The chief thing I had to do was to learn by heart a page of Johnson's Dictionary, not only to spell the words, give their parts of speech and meaning, but, as an exercise of memory, to remember their order of succession. Besides, I had to learn the first principles of writing and the rudiments of French and English grammar."

At the end of a year Mary's education was supposed to be complete. School was expensive, and her parents seem to have expected a very complete and striking amount of knowledge in return for the money spent on her. But it was soon found that Mary could not compose or write an ordinary letter and that her spelling was wild in the extreme. She was reproached, unfairly enough, with waste of time. "My mother said she would have been contented if I had only learnt to write well and keep accounts, which was all that a woman was expected to know."

The only wonder is that Mary ever wanted to look at a book again, with such associations as these. And at first, in her newly recovered freedom, she gladly exchanged Johnson's Dictionary for the far more delightful and ever open Book of Nature.

"When the tide was out," she says, "I spent hours on the sands, looking at the starfish and sea-urchins, or watching the children digging for sand-eels, cockles, and the spouting razor-fish. I made

a collection of shells, such as were cast ashore, some so small that they appeared like white specks in patches of black sand. There was a small pier for shipping limestone brought from the coal-mines inland. I was astonished to see the surface of these blocks of stone covered with beautiful impressions of what seemed to be leaves. How they got there I could not imagine, but I picked up the broken bits and brought them to my repository. I knew the eggs of many birds, and made a collection of them."

So the small beginnings of scientific study were made. Nothing seems to have escaped the observant young eyes. At the bottom of the garden were to be found at low tide masses of rock covered with sea-weeds, and although she did not know the names she could distinguish a large number of the different species. There were no wild flowers in that sandy spot, but farther along the coast was a wood through which flowed a little "burn," the banks of which were covered with ferns, foxgloves, or primroses in their season; and these were a great delight to the child.

But when the long cold winter set in, with snow or rain, Mary "did not know what to do with herself." She hated sewing, much to the horror of good Aunt Janet, who, finding her poring over the pages of Shakespeare, her one unfailing source of delight indoors, said to her mother, "I wonder you let Mary waste her time in reading; she never sews more than if she were a man!"

So a rigorous course of plain needlework was

prescribed, in which she became an unwilling expert. Far more interesting were the lessons in the "use of the globes" from the village schoolmaster.

"My bedroom," she says, "had a window to the south, and a small closet near had one to the north. At these I spent many hours, studying the stars by the aid of a celestial globe. Although I watched and admired the magnificent displays of the Aurora, which frequently occurred, they seemed to be so nearly allied to lightning that I was somewhat afraid of them. At an earlier period of my life there was a comet, which I dreaded exceedingly."

When Mary was thirteen, a long stay in Edinburgh was made the opportunity for giving her writing and music lessons, and on her return to Burntisland the thirst for knowledge seems to have definitely awaked. She taught herself enough Latin to read Cæsar, and that year, for the first time in her life, met with sympathetic encouragement from her uncle, Dr. Somerville, in her lonely quest. When on a visit to his house, she told him with much shyness that she had been trying to learn Latin, but she feared in vain, since her brother, so superior to her in brains and with every assistance, spent years in learning it. Her uncle told her not to despair, and promised to read Virgil with her for an hour or two every morning before breakfast, "which," says she, "I gladly did."

The crowning touch was put on Mary's education, as far as her parents were concerned, by sending her to a dancing-school during a visit to another uncle at Edinburgh; and she gives an amusing

picture of the tall, thin dancing-master, bewigged and beruffled, with his "kit" under his arm and his invariable question during the "deportment" lesson—"Now, if the Queen were to ask you to eat a bit of mutton with her, what would you say?"

But it was on her return to Burntisland that the girl first came across in most unexpected fashion what was to be the great study of her life.

She was asked out to a friend's house to look at some fancy-work, and when this had been discussed she was shown an illustrated Book of Fashions, with coloured plates of ladies' dresses, charades, and puzzles. At the end of a page she found what appeared to be an ordinary problem in arithmetic, but on turning it over she saw "strange-looking lines mixed with letters, chiefly x's and y's," and asked, "What is that?" "Oh," said her friend, "it is a kind of arithmetic: they call it algebra, but I know nothing about it."

With that keen scent for new knowledge which is so conspicuously absent from our present-day girls, with their ample *menu* of mental food, Mary turned over the books at home to try and find the key to the mysterious "algebra." At first she thought she had come upon it in a book on Navigation, and though this did not help her very much, she found something that touched on astronomy, of which she earnestly wished to know more. She dared not ask her elders, so sure was she of being laughed at; and so "sad and forlorn" she felt at her own smallness in proportion to the great

unknown world of knowledge, that she was tempted often to sink back into the life of needlework, piano-playing, and petty interests for which apparently a girl was designed.

Meantime, however, she filled the long hours with learning Greek enough to read Xenophon, and gladly took lessons in painting when her family went to Edinburgh for the season. At last, however, her chance came. Her young brother's tutor, though no mathematician, gladly solved the mystery as to what was meant by "algebra," and also procured for her in Edinburgh a copy of Euclid's Elements and an algebra book. A new field of perfect delight was opened to the girl's mind. Her mother kept her busy in the daytime with mending and making; her piano and painting occupied the hours of daylight; but the evening and often the nights were spent in the curious fascination of problems and diagrams.

Then the servants told her mother that "it was no wonder the stock of candles was soon exhausted, for Miss Mary sat up reading till a very late hour." On this the order was given to take away her candle directly she was in bed.

But darkness did not put a stop to the study of geometry. She had already gone through the first six books of Euclid, and now she went through a certain number of propositions mentally each night, till she had almost completed the whole. Perhaps she unwisely made mention of the fact; for her father, discovering what was going on, exclaimed to his wife, "Peg, we must put a stop

to this, or we shall have Mary in a strait jacket one of these days. There was X., who went raving mad about the longitude!"

So the studies had to be kept secret; and meanwhile Mary, never a mere bookworm, lived a happy, healthy life enough, meeting many interesting people during the long visits to Edinburgh. So many difficulties indeed were put in the way of more intellectual studies that she gave most of her time to painting, though this did not satisfy her eager, craving mind. "I was intensely ambitious to excel in something," she says at this time, "for I felt in my own breast that women were capable of taking a higher place in creation than that assigned to them in my early days, which was very low."

Even after she "came out" and went a good deal into Edinburgh society, she never lost sight of the main object of her life, which was to prosecute her studies. These were frowned on more than ever by her elders, so she used to rise at daybreak, wrap herself in a blanket—for the Edinburgh "season" was the coldest in the year—and read algebra or the classics till breakfast-time.

But these did not wholly absorb her interests. Poetry and stories she delighted in, and her first visit to the Highlands made her a warm admirer of the poems of Ossian. Then came the stirring events of the Napoleonic wars to absorb her interests. Her father lost money at this time, and they returned to a very quiet existence at

Burntisland, where Mary again began her heroic struggle for knowledge, anent which she writes sadly, "I had not the means of pursuing any one as far as I could wish, nor had I any friend to whom I could apply for direction or information. I was often deeply depressed at spending so much time to so little purpose."

In 1804 Mary Fairfax married a Mr. Samuel Greig, and went to live in London. She hoped now for more freedom in study, but unfortunately her husband had no sympathy with her on this point, or interest in science of any kind.

Within three years she returned to her Scottish home, a widow with two little boys; and it was during this period of quiet and leisure that she began undauntedly to try to read Newton's *Principia*, which she naturally found "extremely difficult."

But she had somehow made the acquaintance in England of a mathematical teacher named Wallace, who edited a scientific journal. He sent her copies of this, and she began to solve regularly the problems contained in it. Before long the self-taught mathematician of twenty-eight won a silver medal for a prize problem set in the pages of this paper.

Later on Mr. Wallace was elected Professor of Mathematics at Edinburgh University, and for the first time Mary found a willing and able guide. He suggested to her an excellent mathematical library, and she now began work in good earnest.

"I could hardly believe that I possessed such a treasure when I looked back on the day when I first saw the mysterious word 'algebra' and the long course of years in which I had persevered almost without hope. It taught me never to despair. I had now the means, and pursued my studies with increased assiduity; concealment was no longer possible, nor was it attempted. I was considered eccentric and foolish, and my conduct was highly disapproved of, especially by some members of my own family."

In the year 1812 a new life of hopes fulfilled began for Mary with her marriage with Dr. William Somerville. His relations were very angry, and wrote caustic letters to her "hoping she would give up her foolish manner of life and studies, and make a respectable and useful wife." But Dr. and Mrs. Somerville were far too much in sympathy to care for shafts like these. She was indeed proud to disarm them by her skill in invalid cookery during the honeymoon itself.

They settled in Edinburgh, and soon attracted a circle of scientific and literary acquaintances, who were proud to help the clever young wife to unlock that fountain of scientific knowledge which had been sealed to her so long. Astronomy now became her chief interest, but in geology, physical geography, and many other sciences she quickly became so proficient as to be considered an authority upon them.

Attainment is never as interesting as the

struggle to attain, and we must therefore pass swiftly over the happy years filled with congenial work, with the education of her children, the loving assistance of her husband, and the friendship of such men as Herschel and Parry, the discoverers respectively of sky and land, to interest and occupy her.

A letter of Miss Edgeworth, who saw her frequently, gives a vivid description of Mary Somerville at this time, when she modestly occupied the position of the most learned scientific woman in Britain :—

"Mrs. Somerville is little, slightly made, fairish hair, pink colour, small grey, round, intelligent, smiling eyes, very pleasing countenance, remarkably soft voice, strong but well-bred Scotch accent; timid, not disqualifyingly timid, but naturally modest, yet with a degree of self-possession through it which prevents her being in the least awkward, and gives her all the advantage of her understanding, at the same time that it adds a prepossessing charm to her manner and takes off all dread of her superior scientific learning."

In 1827 her hands were full of work. She was asked to write a treatise on the "Mechanism of the Heavens" which would bring ignorant readers into touch with some of the great truths of science.

In this she was most successful, for her own early struggles no doubt made her long to help others who might be in the same case. Letters of congratulation were showered upon her; she

was elected an honorary member of the Royal Astronomical Society; her bust by Chantrey, the famous sculptor, was set up in their Hall, and the King granted her a pension of £300 a year.

So the busy years went by. Delicate health was not allowed to interfere with work, for we read that when not permitted to rise, she would write in bed till one o'clock. All her literary work was done in the morning, so that the afternoon and evening might be devoted to the claims of husband, children, and friends.

To the end of her long life she kept herself fresh and interested in passing events, and her wonderful intellect remained unimpaired to the last. On the actual day of her death, in her ninety-second year, she revised and completed a treatise on the "Theory of Differences," and rejoiced to find that she could understand and develop the most intricate and difficult formulæ of science as easily as when she was young. In what were almost her last words she expressed her one regret, that "she should not live to see the distance of the earth from the sun determined by the transit of Venus, and the source of the most renowned of rivers, the discovery of which will immortalise the name of Dr. Livingstone."

CHARLOTTE AND EMILY BRONTË

"Sleep, O cluster of friends,
Sleep! Or only when May,
Brought by the west wind, returns
Back to your native heaths,
And the plover is heard on the moors,
Yearly awake to behold
The opening summer, the sky,
The shining moorland—to hear
The drowsy bee as of old
Hum o'er the thyme; the grouse
Call from the heather in bloom.
Sleep, or only for this
Break your united repose!"

SYDNEY DOBELL

HIGH up on the moorland is built the village of Haworth, on the steep grey side of a windy hill. Greyness is indeed the chief characteristic of the place—grey houses, grey church, with grey tombstones paving the paths and forming the outer wall of the churchyard; and greyest of all is the little Parsonage, overlooking the churchyard on one side, and a small courtyard in front.

But all round the stony village and gloomy Rectory stretch great rolling sweeps of moorland, purple with summer heather, white with winter

snows, full of shadows and colours and glorious curves and hollows, forming a perfect playground for the Parsonage children.

Let us take our first glimpse at them in 1821, as they were well remembered in after days by the village women—six little creatures walking in a long line, hand in hand, the tiniest hanging on to the skirts of her elders up to the skyline of the moors, with faces turned towards the sunset. They were not wanted at home, for their quiet, patient mother was dying of cancer and homesickness for her Cornish land, and as long as the children were "good," they might go and do as they liked.

In those days of their first acquaintance with the Yorkshire moors, Maria, the eldest girl, was but seven years old; and then came, in quick succession, Elizabeth, Charlotte, Branwell, Emily, and Anne. Such babies were these four last that they, of course, remembered no other abode, and to them the wild moorland became emphatically their "home," from which, in Emily's case at any rate, it became positive agony, in later days, to separate herself.

During the long spells of wet weather, when the rain poured down from the moorland heights, they had other joys, austere indeed, but no less keen. A little room over the passage was appropriated to their use—no cosy nursery, but a fireless apartment, always known as the "children's study." A pathetic acquaintance with the prevailing "Hush!" of a sickroom stilled the high

voices or joyous laughter, and very early the children learnt the lesson of self-discipline.

"You would not have known there was a child in the house," says their mother's old nurse, "they were such still, noiseless, good little creatures. Maria would shut herself up in the children's study with a newspaper, and be able to tell one everything when she came out—debates in Parliament and I don't know what all. She was as good as a mother to her sisters and brother. But there were never such good children. I used to think them spiritless, they were so different from any I had ever seen."

In this last conjecture the good old woman was altogether wrong.

Repressed almost from their babyhood by an ailing, worried mother and a father who seems to have alternated between aloofness and the treatment of them as grown-up people, they began very early to live a life of their own, which was only very occasionally revealed to their elders. After their mother's death, when Maria was seven years old, an aunt arrived from the South to look after the six children. The chill of the stone floors and the damp moorland air filled poor Miss Branwell with dismay. She interfered very little with the children, and though she ruled the household well she spent most of her time in her bedroom, where, with a constant fire, she could enjoy some of the comforts of her South Country existence.

Mr. Brontë tells us, however, that he was sometimes drawn from the seclusion of his study by

the sound of high and eager voices in angry discussion. But it was no quarrel over a broken doll or a disputed share in a rocking-horse on which he was called to arbitrate. The little sisters were accustomed to write plays for their own acting, in which the Duke of Wellington, Charlotte's hero, "was sure to come off conqueror," and disputes were wont to arise concerning his superiority over Buonaparte, Hannibal, or Cæsar.

In the early years of the last century so-called "children's books" would be quite unknown to the occupants of a country rectory. Hence, being book-lovers from their cradles, the children devoured the volumes they found in their father's scanty library. There they would feed upon books such as Plutarch's Lives, Shakespeare, and certainly the *Pilgrim's Progress*, which last sent six-year-old Charlotte on a perilous journey to find the City Beautiful, only to be turned back in a fit of nervous terror when she reached a tree-darkened road which was clearly the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

The long distance, the wild country, and the motherless condition of the girls all tended to make their existence very solitary. But for this they cared little. They were devoted to each other, and perfectly satisfied with their own companionship; and it must have been a sore wrench to them all when the parental decree went forth that Maria and Elizabeth, now eleven and ten years of age, must go to school.

At Cowan's Bridge a cheap school for clergymen's daughters had lately been opened. Here, in six or seven small damp cottages, were gathered some seventy or eighty girls, to be fed, clothed, and educated for £14 a year; and here the two little sisters were left by their father to be fitted for earning a livelihood in the future. Unfortunately, no training could have been more unsuitable to delicate children, accustomed to a wonder-world of their own, inhabited by great men and women and by fancies and thoughts of which their elders never dreamed.

At Cowan's Bridge all such "nonsense" was swept away, and a parrot-like proficiency in geography, grammar, and arithmetic took its place. Nor were their bodies better fed than their minds. Burnt porridge, tainted beef, sour milk, turned delicate appetites to nausea and loathing, and the girls suffered intensely from the chill that comes from damp and underfeeding. It must have been with mingled feelings of joy and dismay that the two elder girls were joined a few months later by Charlotte and Emily; for they found their "little mother," their quiet, clever Maria, changed into a despairing, suffering child, the butt of the school, and the especial object of the bullying treatment of one of the mistresses. Little did the latter realise that in future days she herself would be pilloried before the world by the savage pen of the small sister, who took her as her model for "Miss Scatcherd," while Maria was the "Helen Burns" of *Jane Eyre*.

Untidy, and forgetful of the dry facts forced daily upon her notice, poor Maria suffered constant punishment, involving loss of food as well as bodily pains and penalties.

No allowance was made for her increasing physical weakness, and to the horrified eyes of the little sisters she grew every day more thin, pale, and suffering. Suddenly a thunderbolt fell on the school. Forty girls sickened with low fever, brought on no doubt by underfeeding and defective drainage. The Brontë children were untouched by it, but, probably through happening to come under the doctor's notice, Maria's condition began at length to alarm the authorities. Mr. Brontë was sent for, and the child was found to be in the last stage of consumption. He took her home in the Leeds coach, which passed the school cottages, towards which she waved a thin little hand, in farewell to the clustering heads at the doorway. Within a week she was dead.

The next child, Elizabeth, who is only remembered at Cowan's Bridge for the patience and silent pluck with which she endured a severe cut on the head, arising from a fall, next attracted the doctor's notice. Another sorrowful farewell was spoken, and Elizabeth was sent home in a servant's charge. Five weeks after her sister's death, she was laid by her side in Haworth Church.

When Charlotte and Emily returned to Haworth for the half-yearly vacation, it must indeed have

seemed that their happy home-world was gradually melting away from their longing gaze. Those midsummer holidays must have been sad enough, but sadder still the return to school, where, although better conditions of food now prevailed, the rough and ready treatment, both mental and physical, was utterly unsuited to nervous, highly-strung, clever children, with free, wild, passionate hearts hidden under their outwardly calm exteriors. Both began to pine and sicken; and to their great joy they were sent home for good in the autumn of that same year, 1825.

And now Charlotte, barely ten years old, found herself in the position of elder sister and mother to the rest. Once again the "study" resounded with eager voices, and busy heads bent over books and papers in absorbed happiness. Miss Branwell exacted a certain task of fine sewing from the three little girls. Mr. Brontë when at leisure from parish affairs taught his son Branwell, a clever boy, who should have been at a good school, and occasionally guided the studies of his daughters; otherwise they were free to learn as they liked.

With some children a period of desultory work and idleness would have ensued. But these five years were some of the most strenuous in Charlotte's life. The gift within her was already stirring, and piles of treasured scraps of blank paper were covered by her eager pen during this period. It was an excellent apprenticeship to her future craft. Tales, poems, whole magazines, character-

sketches, dramas, contemporary incidents, all these appear in minute handwriting about this time, in astonishing quantity and no less surprising quality. She had already grasped the fact, which most young authors are so slow to learn, that the finest preparation for future work was to describe exactly what she saw in her everyday experience, to use her own materials instead of those of other people at second hand.

But there were also unmistakable signs of a vivid and glowing imagination. As with many other fanciful and original children, a game of "Islands," peopled by heroes of history or biography, played a prominent part in their amusements; and Charlotte describes with remarkable exactness the contour, arrangement, and government of these purely imaginary spots. A modern girl would have strained after publication, and competed for prizes in girls' magazines. The Brontë children hugged their writings to themselves in delicious secrecy; not even their father had any idea of their favourite amusement.

In 1831, Charlotte, now nearly fifteen, was still short and slight, with very small hands and feet, a tiny head crowned with a quantity of soft brown hair, a large nose, and quick glancing eyes like a bird's. And now it seems to have dawned upon her father that a year's schooling before she was nine years old was all the formal education given as yet to this clever child of his.

So Charlotte went to school again, at Roe Head, some twenty miles away; appearing there "very

cold and miserable, short-sighted, shy and nervous." She soon won for herself a position in the school, which was a very different institution from Cowan's Bridge.

At first the girls were astonished at her ignorance, for she "had never learnt grammar at all, and knew very little geography." But to their amazement she not only knew the contents of their poetry-books by heart, but could tell them all about the authors and what else they had written. She soon proved herself a magnificent weaver of stories, and on one occasion these became so thrilling, after the lights were turned off and the girls were supposed to be asleep, that one of the audience was forced to "scream out loud" with terror! This year of school-life passed happily away, and only served to intensify the girl's love of reading and study. The "standard authors," as she calls them, Milton, Shakespeare, Goldsmith, Scott, Byron, Wordsworth, were her great delight at this time, and in her letters to her school-friend, Ellen Mussey, she discusses them with a critical though reverential spirit, which showed that they were far more than tasks of literature to her.

At the end of the year she returned home to teach her younger sisters. Life in the quiet Parsonage must have seemed a trifle dull after the fun and companionship of school.

She sketches a day for her friend in these words:—"An account of one day is an account of all. In the morning, from nine o'clock till

half-past twelve, I instruct my sisters and draw; then we walk till dinner-time. After dinner I sew till tea-time, and after tea I write, read, or do a little fancy-work, or draw, as I please."

She never mentions her aunt in these letters, and she complains more than once of the difficulty of getting the books she wants. Her chief joy and that of her two sisters was a survival of the days of childhood. Hand in hand, the three would go up to the moors, where a long walk led to a waterfall, splashing over rocks to a hollow below.

Next to this came the delight, sanctioned by her father, frowned on by her aunt, of tramping to the nearest town for books from a circulating library. These she shared with her sisters, of whom Emily was now a lanky, silent girl of sixteen, and Anne a shy little woman a year younger. Branwell, his sisters' pride, who was going to make the whole family renowned by his artistic talent, was even in these days too popular in the tap-room of the neighbouring tavern to have much time to spare for their society. This clever lad, spoilt by his aunt's indulgence and by his father's mistaken ideas of education, was now agitating to be sent as pupil to the Royal Academy. Money was short, as usual, in the household, and so at the age of nineteen Charlotte, in order to help matters on, went as teacher to Roe Head, taking Emily with her.

Charlotte was not sorry to get some variety from the monotonous home-life. To Emily, in many

ways the more striking and original character of the two, the change was heartbreaking. What happened is well described in her sister's own words:—

"My sister Emily loved the moors. Flowers brighter than the rose bloomed in the blackest of the heath for her; out of a sullen hollow on a livid hillside her mind could make an Eden. She found in the bleak solitude many and dear delights, and not the least and best loved was—liberty. Liberty was the breath of Emily's nostrils; without it she perished. The change from her own home to a school, and from her own very noiseless, very secluded, but unrestricted and unartificial mode of life, to one of disciplined routine, was what she failed in enduring. Her nature proved here too strong for her fortitude. Every morning when she woke, the vision of home and the moors rushed on her, and darkened and saddened the day that lay before her. Nobody knew what ailed her but me. . . . In this struggle her health was quickly broken: her white face, attenuated form, and failing strength threatened rapid decline. I felt in my heart she would die if she did not go home. She had only been three months at school, and it was some years before the experiment of sending her from home was again ventured on."

So Emily gladly returned to her moors, to her beloved Anne and no less beloved dogs, and to those long silences and inward thoughts which were of a depth more profound and of a nature

more remarkable than those of any other of this gifted band. She was no idler, however.

Their old servant, "Tabby," had now become very infirm; whereupon Emily undertook most of the cooking, and all the household ironing and bread-making, studying German meantime "out of a book propped up before her, as she kneaded the dough; and nevertheless," says Mrs. Gaskell, "her bread was always light and excellent!"

Meantime Charlotte, though hating what she called the "drudgery" of teaching, stuck to her post at Roe Head. But the girls were full of ambition, and their vivid imaginations were already sketching out plans for a life which would keep them together and enable them to fulfil some long cherished hopes.

In the long dark evenings of the December holidays of 1836, when nine o'clock struck and father and aunt and maid had gone off to bed so that they had the room to themselves, they were wont to walk up and down in the firelight, arm in arm, discussing and planning for the future. They had all three kept up the childish affection for expressing themselves on paper, and the "rage for scribbling" was strong upon them; but they were uncertain as to the merit of their work.

They had lived so long, however, in the company of great writers, through the loving study of their works, that it was the most natural thing in the world for Charlotte to send a little budget to

the poet Southey, asking him his opinion of the contents. He wrote back kindly, but without encouragement, giving good advice as to self-discipline and cultivation, which Charlotte received wisely if sorrowfully; and then, putting away the cherished manuscript with a sigh, returned to school, taking Anne with her as pupil.

Another year saw them together in holiday-time once more, and on this occasion something like mutiny broke out at the Rectory. For Tabby the faithful had slipped on the steep frozen street and broken her leg, whereupon Miss Branwell decided that she must go to her home and, being past work, must return no more. The girls objected. They would nurse Tabby and undertake the housework themselves. Miss Branwell, having enlisted Mr. Brontë on her side, merely renewed her command; whereupon the three nieces sat silent and pensive each day before their untasted meals, having made up their minds to touch no food until their aunt gave way. This was altogether too much for Miss Branwell, and Tabby remained to be nursed and petted by her former charges.

A few more months of uncongenial school-teaching broke Charlotte down. Anne's health had already given way in an alarming manner, and it seemed but too true that these wild birds could only live in their free moorland air. In the case of Charlotte and Emily, indeed, it was also a case of big, fiery, original souls fretting against and wearing out the frames which were

forced to unnatural primness and self-restraint among strangers.

The spring of 1839 saw them all at home again —saw, too, Charlotte's first offer of marriage from a young clergyman, supposed to be the original of "St. John" in *Jane Eyre*. She tells us her characteristic reasons for refusal: "He knew so little of me . . . it would startle him to see me in my natural home character; he would think I was a wild, romantic enthusiast indeed. I could not sit all day long making a grave face before my husband. I would laugh and satirise and say whatever came into my head first." No, certainly the grave and priggish St. John was no mate for our wild-hearted little Jane Eyre, calm and quiet though she might appear to his unseeing eyes.

Yet the girls must do something. The thin family purse forbade them to stay idle at home, and Branwell, though he had not "entered the Academy," was a heavy burden both financially and otherwise.

He had left a post in a little school because the boys laughed at his red hair, and returned to lounging habits in the village taproom. Still, however, his sisters, and more especially Emily, his "chum," looked to him to retrieve the fortunes of the family; and Charlotte and Anne went off meantime, with heavy hearts, to teach in private families. Not for long, however, could they endure what to them, with their small love for and understanding of children must have been indeed a

weariness to the flesh; and 1840 saw the whole family together again.

This was an unusually happy year for them. Branwell's laziness and bad habits were condoned as a sign of genius, and his gay talk and magnificent plans for the future deceived even the austere old aunt. When the girls begged for a loan to enable them to set on foot their scheme for keeping a boarding-school at the Rectory, she refused on the score that her little savings were put aside to help her nephew towards a career.

Thrown back on herself, Charlotte began to write again; then cast her pen aside to take another uncongenial post, during which time the brilliant idea flashed upon her that the one thing essential to make a school of their own a real success was that she and Emily should, by hook or by crook, get six months' education in a foreign school.

Emily's heart must have sunk at the prospect: the very notion of leaving the moorlands was torture to her; but she was accustomed to conceal her feelings and to follow the lead of the dauntless Charlotte, and so it came about that after much discussion of ways and means, in which Aunt Branwell came nobly to the fore, the two girls found themselves installed as boarders in Madame Héger's Pensionnat des Demoiselles at Brussels.

At first this new life was distasteful enough. It was not easy for women of twenty-four and twenty-six to put themselves in the position of

pupils again. Gradually, however, Charlotte fell under the spell of the genius of the fiery, masterful, excitable little Professor of French, M. Héger, to be painted in glowing colours as M. Paul in *Villette*. Emily disliked him from the first, and openly rebelled against his dictatorial ways. She was as homesick as ever; utterly unable to share in Charlotte's absorption in her new life and work. She prided herself on her English ways, her ugly English frocks; her mind was full of Haworth, and her overflowing heart found expression in lines carefully guarded from the sight of others:—

"... As I mused, the naked room,
The alien firelight died away;
And from the midst of cheerless gloom
I passed to bright, unclouded day.

A little and a lone green lane
That opened on a common wide;
A distant, dreary, dim blue chain
Of mountains circling every side:

. . . . . .

Even as I stood with raptured eye,
Absorbed in bliss so deep and dear,
My hour of rest had fleeted by,
And back came labour, bondage, care."

We must not linger over these days in Brussels; for those who have grown to love the Brontës will find a faithful record of them in *Villette* and *The Professor*. Just at the time that M. Héger, in order to keep his two most promising pupils, had appointed one as English mistress, the other as music teacher on his staff, an urgent message

arrived from Haworth. Miss Branwell was very ill. They hastened to pack their clothes and set off, but before they could do so, a second letter arrived.

Their aunt was dead. This news did but hasten their departure; for Anne was fairly happy in a post as governess, and their father was alone. They hastened back to find worse than the shadow of death in the lonely Parsonage. Branwell, the gifted, the genius, who had for some time past been acting as stationmaster at a little country village, had been dismissed in disgrace for drunkenness and careless neglect of duty, and had returned home to bring a grief to the old aunt who had so firmly believed in him, which probably shortened her days.

Still, the sisters renewed their faith in him and his repentance, refusing to recognise the inherent weakness in a nature that seemed as though it could never stand upright; and three months of peaceful moor walks and household duties followed. Then Anne went back to her post, Branwell obtained a situation as tutor in the same family, Charlotte returned to Brussels alone, and Emily, to her secret joy, was left behind in her beloved Haworth. Alone with the dogs,—Anne's old spaniel and her own bull-terrier, "Keeper," fierce to others, gentle to her,—the cats, and all the dear dumb creatures of the moorland, which appealed with such strength to the heart of this grave, silent, austere woman.

But dark days were at hand. Mr. Brontë's sight began to fail, and in his darkness and loneliness the

old man seemed to be falling into habits of drink. This became a perfect horror to Emily, with thoughts of Branwell always in her mind. She wrote to Charlotte, who at once laid aside her own work and hastened back to Haworth. Dull and quiet seemed to her the life that now opened out before her. She craved after the "rough realities of the world," as she called them.

But these were nearer to lonely Haworth than she imagined. A sense of depression fell upon the sisters. Mr. Brontë, growing blinder every day, became very peevish and irritable; Charlotte grew daily more nervous, with a horrid sense of approaching ill; Anne returned home full of misgivings and more than misgivings as to Branwell's conduct; and then suddenly the blow fell. Disgraced and scarcely sane, the young man returned home, to become a confirmed opium-eater and drunkard, and to break his sisters' hearts.

All thoughts of school-keeping were given up, Anne, always morbid, delicate, and easily depressed, sank into a state of dejection; Charlotte, her soul burning with indignation at the cause of all this misery, refused to speak to him or to treat him with aught but contempt; Emily alone was strong enough to shoulder the burden, and while hating the sin, to love the sinner.

Night after night, when all were in bed, Emily sat up waiting for the unsteady walk, the fumbling hand upon the latch, which heralded her brother's return from the public-house. She it was who gave him a cheering word, who saved him from being

burnt to death in drunken sleep, carrying him like a child to her own bed, while she herself slept in the kitchen, and who sat up at night, after Mr. Brontë had insisted that his miserable son should sleep for safety in his room, listening with strained ears for the pistol-shot with which Branwell often threatened the blind old man.

Never perhaps has history shown us a case of more heroic devotion; never have sisters had to undergo a more terrible strain than during those two years. They could have no visitors, they scarcely dared to leave their home even for a week. It was small wonder that pent-up emotion found its vent in these stormy young hearts in lyric verse. A little volume of verse was made up of various treasured manuscripts; the sisters hid their identity under the names of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell; and the packet went its dispiriting round from publisher to publisher, until at length one was found who undertook to bring out the little book of verse for the sum of £30.

But it brought no fame to the Parsonage house, and little by little their dreams of glory faded away in the hard, matter-of-fact light of everyday troubles. Yet each had still her secret store of comfort and relief. Charlotte had sent *The Professor* on his travels, Anne was busy over *Agnes Grey*, Emily was laying bare her proud and passionate soul in the pages of *Wuthering Heights*.

The evenings were still their own. Marching round the room in the old childish fashion, the three sisters talked over and criticised each other's

characters and plots; then sitting at the table, the three busy pens wrote fast, while the moorland wind wailed round the window. But nothing came of it save rejection and discouragement.

Meantime Mr. Brontë's sight had so far deteriorated that an operation was ventured on; and it was in his darkened room during the weeks that followed that Charlotte, sore at heart at the determined ill-fortune of *The Professor*, began *Jane Eyre*. The origin of the green-eyed Jane was a discussion between the girls as to the impossibility of making a plain heroine acceptable to the public. "I will prove you wrong," said Charlotte, "by showing you a heroine as plain and small as myself who shall be as interesting as any of yours."

Soon after she returned home the news of the acceptance of *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey* arrived to cheer the drooping spirits of Emily, worn out by her unhappy charge, and gentle Anne, who had never recovered from the shock of his disgrace. The terrible part of *Wuthering Heights*, the most powerful of all the Brontës' works, is that it forms largely a study, half unconscious, no doubt, of the wretched Branwell. That it should be so was inevitable under the circumstances.

All the sisters, and Emily most of all, possessed the gift of sincerity so strongly that they could only write faithfully of what they had actually come across in their own experience. We have seen how very limited was that experience; and the whole

secret of the power and attraction of the novels lies in the fact that they are very largely autobiographical.

But the stern insight and gloomy power of Emily's writing did not appeal to a public which preferred the feeble piping of *Agnes Grey*. They failed to see that the very spirit of the moorland was incarnate in the book. No word of praise was heard; and its author, accepting the verdict of failure with stoic fortitude, tried to soothe an aching heart with harder tasks of household duties, more watchful vigilance, and more unselfish devotion to her wretched brother.

But *Jane Eyre*, more melodramatic and unrestrained emotionally, met with instant success. It is, of course, the most autobiographical of all the Brontë books, in so far that it reflects very closely the personality of Charlotte herself, and describes most vividly the early experiences of herself and sisters at Cowan's Bridge.

Its flaring melodrama and weak portrayal of its so-called "heroes" does little to spoil the essential truth and rapid movement of the story; nor is the latter a defect to be wondered at when we remember that with the exception of a few despised curates, Charlotte's only male acquaintances of her own class were her father and her brother. Greatly encouraged by her first success, Charlotte set to work on *Shirley*, of which Emily, or rather a very fanciful portrait of Emily, was to be the heroine. *Shirley* is indeed a highly idealised character, but every now and then we get a glimpse of the

real Emily, the silent, stern, great-hearted woman whom not even Charlotte herself could altogether understand and appreciate.

It is Emily who always sits on the hearthrug of a night reading, with her hand resting on the broad head of her great bulldog, Keeper; Emily who punishes that same Keeper for misdemeanours, though warned that a blow will make him fly at her throat; and who, after thoroughly cowing him, brings water and foments his bruises; she too it is who, bitten by the mad dog to whom she had offered water, goes calmly to the kitchen and cauterises the horrid wound with a red-hot poker.

Meantime the real Emily was steeling herself to support Branwell in the miseries of his last hours. Of herself she never thought, though her hard, hacking cough was a source of great anxiety to her sisters. "It is useless to question her," says Charlotte; "you get no answers. It is still more useless to recommend remedies; they are never adopted."

One Sunday morning in this sad year 1848, Branwell Brontë died—died on his feet, posing to the end, to "show his strength of will." His death should have lifted a burden from the shoulders of those whose loving hearts he had broken, but it was too late. It seemed as though Emily had kept up by sheer force of determination as long as he needed her help and protection, and now she gave way altogether. No words but Charlotte's can tell the touching tale:—

"My sister Emily first declined. Never in all her life had she lingered over any task that lay before her, and she did not linger now. She sank rapidly. She made haste to leave us. Yet, while physically she perished, mentally she grew stronger than we had yet known her. Day by day, when I saw with what a front she met suffering, I looked on her with an anguish of wonder and love. I have seen nothing like it; but indeed I have never seen her parallel in anything. Stronger than a man, simpler than a child, her nature stood alone. The awful point was that while full of ruth for others, on herself she had no pity; the spirit was inexorable to the flesh; from the trembling hand, the unnerved limbs, the faded eyes, the same service was exacted as they had rendered in health. To stand by and witness this, and not dare to remonstrate, was a pain no words can render. Two cruel months of hope and fear passed painfully by, and the day came at last when the terrors and pains of death were to be undergone by this treasure, which had grown dearer and dearer to our hearts as it wasted before our eyes. Towards the decline of that day we had nothing of Emily but her mortal remains as consumption left them. She died December 19, 1848."

They laid her by the side of the erring brother she had loved so faithfully, and returned to the house, where Keeper lay at the door of his mistress's room and howled piteously for many days. Downstairs the two lonely figures sat in the calm of heartbroken resignation. "The anguish of seeing

her suffer is over," writes her sister; "the spectacle of the pains of death is gone by; the funeral day is past. We feel she is at peace. No need now to tremble for the hard frost and the keen wind. Emily does not feel them."

So wrote Charlotte in that bleak December, never realising that before the midsummer roses were full blown, her gentle little sister Anne, with her quiet religious ways and clinging affection, would be taken from her also.

And now she was left alone in the sad, deserted Parsonage, where her father grew more and more solitary in his ways, and the pervading silence became a burden of oppression and horror to the nervous, overwrought, sad-hearted woman. To walk in loneliness round and round the fire-lit room, craving for that human companionship which is the soul's most crying need, listening to the moaning of the wind as it swept down from Emily's moorland with a wild impetuous rush, or sobbed round the casement for the remembrance of patient little Anne —such was Charlotte's dreary lot. Harder still was her self-imposed task of editing her dead sisters' books with a biographical sketch of each, in the very room in which those stories had been read aloud by their writers. No wonder the labour left her, as she says, "prostrate and entombed."

Fortunately, her publishers kept her supplied with the newest books, and gradually she allowed herself to go for occasional visits to the "great world." She was persuaded to visit London, and there made the acquaintance of Thackeray, her literary hero, whom

she idealised to an extent that made him decidedly uncomfortable.

Then hastening back to Haworth, she poured forth her soul in recollections of the happy year at Brussels, in the pages of *Villette.*

Still the shadows gathered closer round that lonely house, haunted by Branwell's querulous tones, by Emily's silent presence, by Anne's hacking cough; and the knowledge of hard-won fame was of small consolation. Well might she cry, in Mrs. Browning's words—

> "How dreary 'tis for women to sit still
> On winter nights by solitary fires
> And hear the nations praising them far off."

And then comes the one bit of romance in that sad, starved existence.

Yet scarcely romance; for the lover who appeared upon the scene was the most unromantic of curates, a Mr. Nicholls who had served her father faithfully in the parish for some years. He had loved her for a long time with a silent, faithful affection which only with difficulty expressed itself in words; and Charlotte seems to have ardently returned his love. But Mr. Brontë, with the terrible selfishness of old age, would not hear of the marriage or of any intercourse between the lovers; so that Mr. Nicholls was obliged to leave Haworth, and the one glimpse of joy that seemed to have entered Charlotte's stunted life was extinguished.

A time of solitary anxiety and grief followed. Perhaps the old recluse began to realise his selfish-

ness, or at least to be convinced that, if he persisted in his condemnation of the marriage, he could scarcely hope to save her from her sisters' fate. Suddenly he withdrew all opposition, and was eager only to hurry on matters as fast as possible.

Strange decree of fate, indeed, that gave to Charlotte, in the last nine months of her short life, that love and devotion, that joy of being first in the heart of another, for which her eager, passionate heart had always craved! Far better than fame to her was the peaceful joy of married life, still spent in the old Parsonage, that no change might trouble her father's last years. But it was not to be for long. She was married in June, and on the last day of the following March she died.

As with wild moorland birds, it seems as though the souls of the three sisters could not bear even the restraint of the happiest home, the most gilded cage. Disgrace had broken the wings of the gentle-hearted Anne, it is true; but endurance had never tamed the wild heart of Emily, only fretting the cord that bound her to earth till she was free to fly from hence. And with Charlotte it was the same. Happiness had come too late: it was unnatural to the eager, restless soul to be loved and cared for; the cup of joy overflowed, and she too escaped into the unknown.

And so, when we read and re-read those wonderful novels, instinct with life and motion, we begin to realise the secret of their power. For they were written with heart's blood for ink and

the piercing dart of experience for pen. Yet even then they fall far short, in interest and romantic pathos, from the lives of those three sisters themselves, in their lonely home among the Yorkshire moors.

SISTER DORA

SISTER DORA
(DOROTHY WINSLOW PATTISON)

"Her Angel's face
As the great eye of Heaven shyned bright
And made a sunshine in the shady place."
SPENSER, *Faery Queene*

NO place in the world perhaps needs sunshine—moral as well as actual sunshine—as the wards of a hospital.

It is hard, too, for the sun to shine in Walsall, because of the pall of smoke that hangs over the town, with its many chimneys and great iron foundries. The inhabitants of the place are not of the most refined order, yet the roughest of the rough iron-workers had a smile and a nod for the bright-faced woman in nurse's uniform as she passed amongst them.

For it was she who had brought the sunshine of human sympathy and tenderness to them, or to their relatives who had suffered in disease or accident—suffered often despairingly, till she had brought to them the gift of hope. And if you asked any of those grimy fellows who it was who had passed by, they would reply, in surprise at your ignorance—

"Who is it? Why, it's *our* Sister Dora!"

In the year 1832 Dora Pattison was born in the little Yorkshire village of Hauxwell, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, of which her father was the rector. Her childhood was marked by a quiet but persistent determination to get her own way by one device or another, which already spoke of the strong will and firm purpose of the future woman. In these early days, however, it was occasionally doomed to failure. She tells an amusing story of some hated velvet bonnets which she and her sister were obliged to wear on Sundays. Dora was determined firmly to avoid appearing in them; so she waited for a soaking wet day, and only delaying long enough to make sure her mother had gone for a drive, rushed upstairs and said to her sister, "Be quick: now's our chance for spoiling our bonnets!"

Hastily they put them on, opened the library windows and stuck their heads well out, until the velvet was drenched through and through. When the soaking was complete, the offensive headgear was put away again. Sunday came, and their mother, seeing them bareheaded, inquired, "Where are your bonnets?"

"Quite spoilt," replied Dora firmly; "we can never wear them again."

Mrs Pattison thought differently, however; they were made to wear them for many a long week, and the naughty little girls were obliged to confess that they had not improved matters by their skilful manœuvre.

The healthy, open life of the moors changed Dora from a delicate child to a strong, bonny, merry girl, full of a vigour which became restlessness as soon as her energy failed to find sufficient scope. She was intensely eager to join Miss Nightingale's band of nurses for the Crimea; but her father, realising her want of training and discipline, told her, quite rightly, that she would be worse than useless, and refused to let her go. She chafed inwardly, but outwardly submitted for a time to the quiet home-life, of which her bright face and never failing spirits made her the "Sunshine" that her father always called her. Then her mother died, and a new fit of restless energy took possession of the girl.

Nothing would content her but a life of hard work and poverty; and so she became a village schoolmistress, where she obtained all she could want of both. She loved the children and managed them excellently, but her vocation did not lie in the direction of teaching. The loneliness of the country cottage oppressed her spirits; she constantly wished to be elsewhere. Suddenly she made up her mind that if she could but go into a Sisterhood all would be well—that the giving up of that strong will of hers would lead to perfect peace. A severe illness forced her to resign her school-work, and she barely allowed herself time to get well before attaching herself in her usual headstrong haste to a working Sisterhood at Coatham, in Yorkshire.

It was not in the least likely that such a

restricted life would suit her. She was of too strong a nature to mould her character according to the bidding of others, too fond of her own way to ever really give up her will, and had too masculine a force of both mind and body ever to settle down happily in a community of women. But it was a period of excellent discipline for her. Cleaning hearths, making beds, or scrubbing floors is no bad outlet for superfluous energy, though she was very thankful when the opening of a little cottage hospital at Walsall gave her more congenial work.

At first Sister Dora, as she was henceforth to be called, was the merest subordinate, as became her position as a novice almost entirely ignorant of nursing.

Most of the cases brought to the hospital were surgical, the result of the ghastly accidents which were always occurring in the coal and iron pits; and so expert did she soon become in tending these that when a sudden order from the Coatham Sisterhood bade her go at once and nurse a private case in Devonshire, both the hospital committee and she herself were inclined to rebel. Just at that moment a letter reached her with the news that her father was dying, and earnestly wished to see her. She telegraphed to Coatham for leave to go to him at once; but, possibly with the idea that she needed to be taught the lesson of obedience and self-denial, this was refused. With a heavy heart, she set off for Devonshire, and had only just arrived when she heard of her father's death.

She returned at once to Walsall, wretched and deeply depressed in mind and body. Henceforth her connection with the Sisterhood was much weakened, except in so far as she wished to carry on the work she had begun with them. A few years later she parted from it altogether; but long before this time her real vocation had made itself clear.

The cottage hospital no longer sufficed for its patients' needs, and when a new building was raised on the top of the "Mount," a hill overlooking the town, its sole management was put into the hands of Sister Dora. Scarcely was it opened when smallpox broke out in Walsall, and although infectious cases were not admitted, the brave woman, arguing that she was exposed to infection anyhow from the many surgical out-patients who came to her with the disease upon them, gave up the time that should have been devoted to sleep or rest, to nursing in their own homes those who otherwise would have been entirely neglected.

She was called one night to the bedside of one of her old patients, who was dying of the disease in its most malignant form. He was quite alone in a miserable room lit by one small bit of candle-end. Calling a neighbour, Sister Dora gave her money to buy some means of light, while she remained with the sufferer. The woman never returned, and so she sat in the gathering darkness alone with the dying man. Just as the candle was sputtering out, he rose in bed, exclaiming,

"Sister, kiss me before I die." She took him in her arms and kissed the poor disfigured face, promising she would never leave him while he lived. And then began the awful watching, in complete darkness, for the death which she did not recognise even when it came. For when, at the first glimmer of dawn, she went to seek his neighbours, the man had been dead some hours.

Her chief interest lay, however, in trying to save the limbs of those who had been mutilated by the machinery of the iron pits. One of these cases was especially touching. A fine strong young collier was brought in with a terribly mangled arm. "Nothing can save it; amputation must take place at once," pronounced the surgeon. The answering groan of despair from the patient called up on the nurse's face a look of such deep pity that the man exclaimed, "Oh, Sister, save my arm for me! It's my right arm."

Turning to the doctor, she said, "I believe I can save this arm, if you will let me try."

The doctor was naturally extremely angry, and told her roughly that he knew best, and that if the arm were not amputated at once, the man would die.

The patient listened eagerly to the altercation; but when the choice was given him, he gladly consented to take his chance with Sister Dora.

"Very well," said the irate surgeon; "but remember it's *your* arm—you take the responsibility. I will have nothing to do with the case."

So she was left to do as best she could. "How I prayed over that arm!" she used to say in later days, when she described the almost ceaseless tending given to it for three weeks. At the end of that time, she called the doctor to inspect her work. "Why, you have saved it!" he cried, and with generous triumph brought in the whole of the hospital staff to show them "what could be done in the way of conservative surgery," as he called it.

Some time after her patient had left the hospital, Sister Dora had a severe illness, brought on by overwork and worry. All through this anxious period this young man walked eleven miles into Walsall every Sunday, his only holiday, and giving a vigorous pull at the bell, would ask, "How's Sister?" And when he had been answered, he would say, "Tell her that's *her* arm what rang the bell," and then turned to walk his weary journey back again.

Her influence over men was wonderful, and a sojourn in her hospital ward often sent a man out a reformed character. Her delightful humour was partly the secret of this influence. "Make you laugh?" said a burly Irishman. "She'd make you laugh if you were dying!"

"My dear," she would sometimes say, "if I could not laugh over the things, I don't know what I should do."

Her powers of endurance were even more marvellous. From the time she rose in the morning till the last thing at night she was incessantly at work; and the bell which hung over her bed, and communicated with the patients' ward, was seldom

still at night. Perhaps she erred on the side of thinking that no one could ever take her place or relieve her of any of her duties because of their comparative inefficiency; certainly her patients considered themselves ill-used if they were tended by any hands save hers.

In 1875 a fresh and terrible outbreak of small-pox occurred in Walsall. An epidemic hospital had been built on the outskirts of the town, but no power could induce the poor people to send their infected relations thither, and so stay the spread of the disease. At this crisis Sister Dora suddenly offered to leave her own work and go to nurse the patients in the smallpox hospital. The authorities eagerly seized the chance. Others might manage the accidents; only Sister Dora could induce the Walsall folk to send their smallpox cases to be under her care.

The offer was not made lightly; for Sister Dora was one of those who catch every disease to which they are exposed, and she went, moreover, with a depressing conviction that she should never return to her beloved accident wards. Yet she only flinched once from what she considered a plain duty, and that was when she found herself on the doorstep of the incredibly dismal building, standing in the midst of heaps of "slag," with a few blackened cabbages growing at its entrance.

Shivering with irrepressible dread at the thought of a lonely struggle with the most loathsome form of disease, she said to the surgeon who had brought her, "Oh, take me back! I can't endure this dread-

ful place—I did not know what it would be like!" His only reply was "Come in!"—and from the moment she crossed the threshold the victory was won.

Nothing but the strongest religious faith could have kept her up in the long battle with disease. She was quite alone save for two old women who came in occasionally from the workhouse to help with the washing, and a night porter who often stayed away and got drunk. Sometimes the delirious patients tried to escape, and she had a hard fight to keep them in bed. All this terrible time she had scarcely any rest, but read the most exciting novels she could get at night to prevent herself becoming too sleepy. When those who were attacked in their own homes refused to come to the hospital, the Sister would go and fetch them herself, lifting them in her arms to the ambulance as though they had been babies instead of grown men and women. Yet she could write, "I thank God daily for my life here. I feel He sent me, and He has blessed it to my own soul." And so that six months of incessant toil amid loathsome surroundings came to an end, and she returned with joy to her own beloved hospital.

Suddenly, in the midst of all her splendid work, the call came to lay it aside. A terrible internal disease manifested itself, but true to all her self-denying instincts Sister Dora kept the fact a complete secret, and went on working harder than ever. Then a period of enforced holiday occurred, while a new and improved hospital was being made

ready for her patients. She visited Paris and London, intent on studying the latest surgical appliances, but these she was never destined to use. Her disease made rapid progress, and her one cry now was, "Let me die among my own people!"

So she returned to Walsall, to a little house near the unfinished hospital; but the news of her severe illness was received by her "children" —rough miners and factory workers—with utter incredulity. Her wonderful strength and vitality had become a matter of course to them. "Her'll get well," they said; "her *never* can be going to die."

But when they at length understood, despair reigned in all the slums and byways of Walsall. It was given her to see the new hospital opened, "in the name of Sister Dora"; but the end was drawing very near. For a time she was haunted by a horror of that "Brother Death" whose approach had become so familiar to her in the case of others, but this at length passed quite away.

Years before, a little girl of nine years old, too badly burnt to live, had been laid in the nurse's arms. Nothing could be done for her, but Sister Dora never ceased to soothe and comfort the dying child until the end. The little one died quite happily, saying very simply, as she put up her mouth to be kissed, "When you come to heaven, Sister, I'll meet you at the gates with a bunch of flowers."

We can but believe that Sister Dora's last hour,

in the loneliness of death, was cheered by the remembrance of those many souls whom she had tended during their last moments and helped to face death with courage, and who now would throng to meet their "own Sister" on the other side of the grave.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING
(1806–1861)

"No artist lives and loves that longs not
Once and only once, and for one only,
(Ah, the prize!) to find his love a language
Fit and fair and simple and sufficient."

R. BROWNING, *One Word More*

TO Hope End, a woody and charmingly situated estate among the Malvern Hills, there came in the year 1809 a retired West Indian planter, named Edward Barrett, together with his wife and little daughter, a child of barely three years old. Two more girls and eight boys came in due time to fill the Hope End nurseries, but from the first Elizabeth seems to have been her father's most darling child. Full of the warmth and fervent imagination of the South, the little maiden began very early to try to express her abundant fancies in verse.

"I wrote verses," she tells us, "at eight years old and earlier; but what is less common, the early fancy turned into a will and remained with me, and from that day to this, poetry has been a distinct object with me — an object to read, think, and live for."

Fortunately for this aim, her unusual and precocious little mind was not forced through the mill of a commonplace education. Pope's Homer seems to have been her favourite reading from her eighth year; and so "the Greeks haunted her until she dreamed more of Agamemnon than of Moses the black pony."

Naturally enough, her first important attempt at self-expression was an "epic" in four books, written at the age of twelve, called *The Battle of Marathon.* A much more important effect of her love for Pope's Homer was to turn her mind to the study of Greek. In her beautiful home among the hills she tells us that she "had her fits of Pope and Byron and Coleridge, and read Greek as hard under the trees as some of your Oxonians in the Bodleian; gathered visions from Plato and the dramatists, and ate and drank Greek, and made my head ache with it."

But she was not by any means a mere bookworm at this time. She had never been strong, but she loved outdoor exercise, especially riding. Unfortunately, this last delight brought about indirectly a complete cessation of all such things, and condemned her to the life of a chronic invalid. When Elizabeth was about fifteen, she ran out one day, impatient for her ride, to saddle her pony in the field.

Either by a fall, or from a strain in pulling the girths of the saddle, she injured her spine in a way that seriously affected her general health, even if it did not confine her to a sofa altogether for the first few years.

This sudden removal from active amusements was less of a trial to her than it would have been to many girls. She had always been dreamy and fond of solitude. Even in her earlier years her favourite game had been the lonely amusement of creating a giant out of turf, laid flat on the ground; and then, as she tells us in her poem of *Hector in the Garden*, she made for him

> "Eyes of gentianellar azure,
> Staring, winking at the skies;
> Nose of gillyflowers and box;
> Scented grasses put for locks
> Which a little breeze at pleasure
> Set a-waving round his eyes.
>
> And a breastplate made of daisies,
> Closely fitting, leaf on leaf;
> Periwinkles interlaced,
> Drawn for belt about the waist;
> While the brown bees, humming praises,
> Shot their arrows round the chief."

Now that she must rest and "go softly" all her days, her thoughts naturally turned more and more to her beloved heroes of Greek literature. Love of Greek stirred her to master the Latin language, and in these studies she had the sympathy of her favourite brother Edward, of whom she says—

> "And when the laughing mood was nearly o'er
> Together, many a minute did we wile
> On Horace' page, or Maro's sweeter lore;
> While one young critic on the classic style
> Would sagely try to frown and make the other smile."

Her delicacy won for her a little bedroom for her own, a privilege much valued in that large and noisy family; and this is her description of it:—

"I had a little chamber in the house
As green as any privet-hedge a bird
Might choose to build in. . . .
The walls
Were green, the carpet was pure green, the straight
Small bed was curtained greenly, and the folds
Hung green about the window, which let in
The out-door world with all its greenery.
You could not push your head out and escape
A dash of dawn-dew from the honey-suckle."

In this bower, then, we may picture her spending much of her time during the next few years. She was always much given to describing her own life and interests, either in letters or in poems, with that gift of self-revelation which nearly always accompanies a pronounced lyrical faculty, and from this time we can construct her whole biography almost in her own words.

The most important event in these quiet years of girlhood was her friendship with the blind Greek scholar, Hugh Stuart Boyd. Through his kindly help and interest, Elizabeth became soaked in Greek literature, which exercised a marked influence upon some of her future work. Very pleasant to the learned man with his darkened eyes were these times of study, but to the enthusiastic maiden they were golden hours indeed.

"As I think of those long mornings
Which my thought goes far to seek,

When betwixt the folio's turnings,
Solemn flowed the rhythmic Greek.
. . . . . .
Then what golden hours were for us!—
While we sat together there;
How the white vests of the chorus
Seemed to wave us a live air!
How the cothurns trod majestic
Down the deep iambic lines,
And the rolling anapæstic
Curled, like vapour over shrines!"

Six years of quiet study and confirmed ill-health passed away, marked chiefly by the excitement of the publication in 1826 of a little book of poems, written by Elizabeth before she was seventeen. They are not remarkable as poetry, for the thought was naturally immature, but the style and breadth of reading shown in them promised better things for the future.

But in 1826 poetry was laid aside for a time; for Mrs. Barrett, of whom we hear and know very little, but who was tenderly loved by her daughter, died, and Elizabeth, as the eldest, was left to cheer, guard, and console her father and seven brothers and sisters. Four years later, when the emancipation of slaves began to affect her father's income very seriously, Hope End was sold, and the family migrated to Sidmouth, in Devonshire.

There Elizabeth's second volume, a translation of *Prometheus*, was produced, a piece of work which she justly said in after days "should have been thrown in the fire, as the only means of giving it a little warmth." And then, after two years of sea and sunshine, which seem to have

caused her to lay aside all invalid habits, a house was taken in London, and the great city became Elizabeth's home for the rest of her unmarried life.

From this time, owing to the unfitness of her weak lungs and delicate frame to stand the heavy London atmosphere, Elizabeth became a confirmed invalid. Two compensations were hers, however. Confinement to the house meant much extra time for literary work, and almost from the beginning of her life in London she became a regular contributor to the magazines. Partly through these poems, partly through the kind offices of Mr. Kenyon, a family connection whom she liked to call her cousin, she came to know a number of interesting figures in the world of literature. She met Wordsworth twice, and thought "she must certainly be dreaming." "His manners," she says, "are very simple, and his conversation not at all *prominent*." Landor became an acquaintance, and Miss Mitford an intimate friend.

In 1838 a broken blood-vessel brought the young poet face to face with death, and from this time her hold on life was of the frailest. Unfortunately, although Mr. Barrett would spend unheard-of sums in doctors and drugs, he would not hear of moving her from the place which was obviously the cause of her illness, but stifled her with care and cotton-wool in a gloomy London bedroom, where she lay and watched the sun

> "Push out through fog with his dilated disk,
> And startle the slant roofs and chimney pots
> With splashes of fierce colour."

Or she saw the fog—

> "Fog only, the great tawny weltering fog,
> Involve the passive city, strangle it
> Alive, and draw it off into the void,
> Spires, bridges, streets and squares, as if a sponge
> Had wiped out London."

At length, however, she became so ill that the doctors insisted on her removal to a warmer climate for the winter. This period extended itself to three years, and Torquay, the place selected, became the scene of the great tragedy of Elizabeth Barrett's life. Her brother Edward, the beloved "Bro" of her letters, had accompanied his favourite sister to her health resort. In the July following the autumn in which the migration had been made, while "Ba," as he always called her, was slowly improving in health and busy with new poems, Edward Barrett set out in a small boat with two friends, for a sail.

Night came, and they had not returned. Sick with anxiety, the lonely watcher left at home tried to persuade herself that they had landed elsewhere and were returning by rail or on foot. The slow hours of Sunday dragged themselves away, and presently brought a rumour that a boat containing three men had been seen to founder in Babbicombe Bay. Even then it was some days before the finding of the drowned men confirmed the report.

The horror and suspense of this dreadful experience very nearly killed Elizabeth. She had always been inclined towards a morbid turn of thought

and now that her spirit was crushed by the weight of grief, she fancied that she had been the cause of his ultimely death, in having begged him to share her exile. She speaks piteously in her letters of her "tendency to lie down to sleep among the snows of a weary journey"; and her whole remaining strength was consumed in her desire to get away from Torquay and from the hateful sound of the sobbing of the treacherous waves upon the shore. For this she had to wait another year, and then her return was only to a state of chronic invalidism in her London home.

The dreariness, the "stuffiness," as modern girls would say, of such an existence, can scarcely be described. She chronicles as a really startling event that "the window has twice been open for an inch"! and this window did not even look upon the street, with its ever-changing pictures of humanity. Her state of health was at this time such that she fainted regularly on being carried from the bed to the sofa. One is tempted to wonder what would have been the treatment meted out to Elizabeth Barrett by a doctor of to-day with a passion for the "open-air cure."

In the light of future events it is not very audacious perhaps to think that had she been transferred to a sunny climate and made to live out of doors and take regular exercise, the sick-room would have known her no more. But those were the days of coddling and distrust of air and light, and it is all the more credit to her that her spirit and intellect, when she had once

recovered the shock of Edward's death, did not flag with her body.

She was always busy with her sweet, fanciful poetry; she read every new book and a great many old ones; and she was quite human enough to take a very real delight in the charming spaniel "Flush," who now came into her possession, and indeed into her very heart.

"Flush's breathing is my loudest sound," she says, in describing the silence of her sickroom, "and then the watch's tickings, and then my own heart when it beats too turbulently. Judge of the quiet and the solitude!"

Very patheric, too, is her description of how she planted ivy in a window-box, that, when it tapped the window panes in rough weather, it might speak to her of the joys of the natural world which seemed so far away.

Yet it was during these silent years that her best work was done. Her *Cry of the Children* did much to hasten the passing of an Act of Parliament restricting the working age of the little ones:—

"Do you hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers'—
And *that* cannot stop their tears.
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows;
The young birds are chirping in the nest;
The young fawns are playing with the shadows;
The young flowers are blowing towards the west—
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!—
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free."

Her *Lessons from the Gorse* is a curiously beautiful bit of Nature painting to come from the pen of one who directly the "angel of summer" had fled away, was shut up in her prison bedroom with rigorous care and completeness. "The prison doors are shut close, and I could dash myself against them sometimes with a passionate impatience of the needless captivity," she writes in an unwonted burst of revolt. "I feel so intimately, and from evidence, how, with air and warmth together in any fair proportion, I should be as well and happy as the rest of the world—it is intolerable."

We could wish, perhaps, that she had summoned up the strength to rebel against the strong parental will and utterly mistaken hygienic views that made such an imprisonment possible for five long winters. But release was at hand; and into the darkened atmosphere, laden with the scent of medicines and prescriptions, there came all at once the brightest and breeziest of out-of-door spirits, prepared to carry off the prisoner if need be in his very arms.

Ever since January 1845, Elizabeth Barrett had kept up a flourishing correspondence with Robert Browning, "author of *Paracelsus* and king of the mystics," as she calls him. In the May of that same year they first met in person, and from that time Browning became a frequent visitor to the house in Wimpole Street and to the sofa where Miss Barrett lay.

Rapidly their friendship ripened into love—a

love which was never damped for him by the thought of marrying a wife who at that time seemed utterly unable even to stand upright, though Elizabeth was painfully aware, on her part, of two serious difficulties. She dreaded to burden the life of her already famous lover by the responsibility of an invalid wife; and even more she dreaded the determined opposition of her father, who had always regarded his children as belonging solely to himself, in the same way as his household furniture.

More especially, too, since his favourite daughter had won fame by her poetry, he was only too likely to look upon any attempt to leave his roof as an act of treacherous ingratitude.

Any sympathy we may feel for Mr. Barrett for his excess of parental jealousy is largely discounted when we remember that in this same year, when the doctors strongly pressed Elizabeth to winter abroad as almost the only means of preserving the little strength she had gained throughout the summer, her father met the proposal with an absolute refusal. He had grown used to shutting his daughter up in solitary confinement from September to May, and he would not hear of any attempt to break through the established rule. He treated her, moreover, with great displeasure, and scarcely saw her during the long dark days, because of her natural attempt to improve her state of health.

Deeply wounded by this treatment, Elizabeth determined to take fate into her own hands, as

the only way of escape from the dreariness of her existence in the gloomy London house.

She promised, therefore, that if she lived through the ensuing winter she would marry her lover before the next year. An unusually mild season brought her safely into May, and at once he claimed her promise. During the summer she gained strength enough to drive, and even walk for a little way; and meantime plans were made. No one knew of them, for it was hopeless to ask Mr. Barrett's approval, and his wrath would fall heavily on those who might be implicated in the plot.

And so it came to pass that on September 12, 1846, with her faithful maid Wilson in attendance, she slipped quietly from the house, and was married to Robert Browning in Marylebone Church.

A week later she left her home for ever, and joining her husband, crossed at once to Paris, carrying with her only Wilson and her beloved Flush as remnants of her old life. A new existence of love and joy and comparative health lay before her, only shadowed by the unrelenting wrath of her father, who would neither read her letters nor ever look upon her face again.

Italy, the home of poets, was henceforth to be the abiding-place of Mr. and Mrs. Browning, and Florence became the scene of one of the very happiest wedded lives that has ever been dreamed of. Happiness was no bar to literary work, though, as the following charming incident shows. It was their habit to write in separate rooms, and

not to show each other what they had written. "One morning, early in 1847, their breakfast being over, Mrs. Browning went upstairs, while her husband stood at the window watching the street till the table should be cleared.

"He was presently aware of someone behind him, although the servant was gone. It was Mrs. Browning, who held him by the shoulders to prevent him turning to look at her, and at the same time pushed a packet of papers into the pockets of his coat. She told him to read that, and to tear it up if he did not like it; and then she fled again to her own room."

These papers were the "Sonnets from the Portuguese," *not* translations, as the uninitated suppose, but the simple and sincere story of her love. She had written them without a thought of publication, but Mr. Browning, in his own words, "dared not reserve to himself the finest sonnets since Shakespeare's written in any language." They were printed privately, and not till three years later did they appear before the general public.

Never, perhaps, has there been known such a perfect wedded life as that of these two poet-lovers. There is little to recount of its beautiful story, because it was so blissful and happy. "I have happiness," writes Mrs. Browning, "enough for my share to be divided among all my friends and leave everyone contented. For me, I take it for pure magic, this life of mine. Surely nobody was ever so happy before."

In the March of 1849 came the crowning joy

of Mrs. Browning's life—the birth of her little son Robert, "Peninni," as she generally calls him. Two years later the Brownings paid their first visit to England since their wedding. It was not a success. Mr. Barrett still obstinately refused to see his daughter or to hear of her welfare, and the change of climate quickly affected Mrs. Browning for the worse. "My first step ashore was into a puddle and a fog," she writes, "and I began to cough before we reached London."

They went to Paris for a while, but returned to London for the summer; and in November of that year were safely settled in their "Casa Guidi" at Florence once again. Here Mrs. Browning began her longest poem, *Aurora Leigh*; and about the same time the mystical side of her nature began to assert itself in an interest and belief in spiritualism—a taste which became the only source of difference, and that a very slight one, between herself and her husband, whose more robust mind was utterly averse from the whole subject. But to judge from her charming letters, the great interest of Mrs. Browning's life was her boy.

In no case, perhaps, was the mistaken slur generally cast on "literary mothers" more out of place. She was perfectly devoted to him, and he was extraordinarily like her, with the same delicate features and Ariel-like mind. A visitor of this period describes her thus:—"She is very small, delicate, dark, and expressive. She looks like a spirit. A cloud of hair falls on each side of

her face in curls, so as partly to veil her features. But out of the veil look sweet, sad eyes, musing and far-seeing and weird. Her fairy fingers look too airy to hold, and yet their pressure was very firm and strong. The smallest possible amount of substance encloses her soul, and every particle of it is infused with heart and intellect."

Her impressions of Peninni are equally well described:—

"In the dim light he looked like a waif of poetry, drifted up into the dark corner, with long curling brown hair, and buff silk tunic embroidered with white. . . . In a brighter light he was lovelier still, with brown eyes, fair skin, and a slender, graceful figure."

But in spite of her love for little Peninni, the first place in Mrs. Browning's heart was filled with her intense affection for her poet-husband. Always her most sympathetic confidant, her nurse during her still frequent attacks of illness, her devoted lover throughout the happy fifteen years of their wedded life, he was ever by her side, her first thought, her one great abiding joy. For him she lived, and in his loving arms she died.

It was on June 29, 1861, that the end came to her happy life. A chill touched the lungs, always terribly frail; but no one thought it was anything more serious than her usual attacks. "There was no lingering, nor acute pain, nor consciousness of separation," wrote her husband. "God took her to Himself as you would lift a sleeping child from a dark, uneasy bed into your

arms and the light. The last word was, when I asked, 'How do you feel?' 'Beautiful!'"

Such was the peaceful passing of one of the most lovely spirits of this earth. Florence was her home in death, as it had been her ideal abode in life; and over her was written in Italian this inscription:—

HERE WROTE AND DIED
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING
WHO IN HER WOMAN'S HEART UNITED
THE WISDOM OF THE SAGE AND THE ELOQUENCE
OF THE POET
WITH HER GOLDEN VERSE LINKING ITALY
TO ENGLAND
GRATEFUL FLORENCE PLACED
THIS MEMORIAL
A.D. 1861.

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